



# Northumberland

## County Council

Your ref:

Our ref:

**Enquiries to:** Karon Hadfield

**Email:** karon.hadfield@northumberland.gov.uk

**Tel direct:** 0345 600 6400

**Date:** 28 February 2022

Dear Sir or Madam,

Your attendance is requested at a meeting of the **CABINET** to be held in the meeting space, Floor 2, Block 1, County Hall, Morpeth on **TUESDAY, 8 MARCH 2022 at 10.00 AM.**

Yours faithfully

Daljit Lally  
Chief Executive

**To Cabinet members as follows:-**

**G Renner-Thompson, J Riddle, G Sanderson (Chair), J Watson, R Wearmouth (Vice-Chair), C Horncastle, W Pattison and W Ploszaj**

Any member of the press or public may view the proceedings of this meeting live on our YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/NorthumberlandTV>.

***Members are referred to the risk assessment, previously circulated, for meetings held in County Hall. Masks should be worn when moving round but can be removed when seated, social distancing should be maintained, hand sanitiser regularly used and members requested to self-test twice a week at home, in line with government guidelines.***



**Daljit Lally, Chief Executive**  
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## **AGENDA**

### **PART I**

It is expected that the matters included in this part of the agenda will be dealt with in public.

#### **1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

#### **2. MINUTES**

(Pages 1  
- 12)

Minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held on 8 February 2022, as circulated, to be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

#### **3. DISCLOSURE OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

Unless already entered in the Council's Register of Members' interests, members are required to disclose any personal interest (which includes any disclosable pecuniary interest) they may have in any of the items included on the agenda for the meeting in accordance with the Code of Conduct adopted by the Council on 4 July 2012, and are reminded that if they have any personal interests of a prejudicial nature (as defined under paragraph 17 of the Code Conduct) they must not participate in any discussion or vote on the matter and must leave the room. NB Any member needing clarification must contact [monitoringofficer@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:monitoringofficer@northumberland.gov.uk). Please refer to the guidance on disclosures at the rear of this agenda letter.

#### **4. REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ADULTS AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

(Pages  
13 - 108)

##### **Final Decision on the Statutory Proposals for Atkinson House**

This report sets out an analysis of the representations (responses) received from interested parties during the four-week statutory consultation, which began on 13 January and closed on 10 February 2022, on proposals for Atkinson House Special School, Seghill, the secondary provision for boys with Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs (SEMH) in Northumberland. The published statutory proposal set out the following proposed prescribed changes to the school: -

1. To relocate Atkinson House Special School from its current site in Seghill, Northumberland to the former Richard Coates school site in Ponteland, Northumberland with effect from 1 September 2022;
2. To change the designation of the school from single sex to co-educational with effect from 1 September 2022, thus enabling the enrolment of girls onto the school roll;
3. Increasing the planned pupil places at the school from 80 to 100

with effect from 1 September 2022.

Cabinet is asked to make a final decision on whether or not to approve the prescribed changes as set out in the Statutory Proposal for implementation with effect from 1 September 2022 (Appendix A).

The report of the FACS OSC on this matter will be circulated when the Committee has met.

**5. REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR FOR CLIMATE CHANGE, BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE AND CORPORATE PERFORMANCE** (Pages 109 - 124)

**Climate Change Update**

To provide an update on progress against the Climate Change Action Plan 2021-23, published in January 2021 (Appendix B).

The report of the Communities and Place OSC will be circulated when the Committee has met.

**6. REPORT OF THE INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR COMMUNITIES AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT** (Pages 125 - 130)

**Household Support Fund Update**

To provide members with an update of Northumberland County Council's progress for delivery of the DWP Household Support Fund (HSF) for the period 06th October 31st December 2022 (Appendix C).

The report of the CSEG OSC will be circulated when the Committee has met.

**7. REPORT OF INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF PLANNING AND LOCAL SERVICES** (Pages 131 - 138)

**Development of the Potland Burn Biodiversity Net Gain Site and Approval of Capital and Revenue Expenditure**

To seek approval for the capital and revenue expenditure that will be incurred in the development of the first phase of the Potland Burn biodiversity net gain site and which is fully funded by a S.106 contribution by Britishvolt, and for the capital and revenue budgets to be amended. To set out the likely need for further habitat creation at this site to meet the biodiversity net gain requirements for future strategic scale inward investment (Appendix D).

**8. REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE** (Pages 139 - 198)

**Longframlington Neighbourhood Plan**

To seek approval to formally 'make' the Longframlington Neighbourhood Plan. The Plan passed independent examination in October 2021. A local referendum held in the Parish of Longframlington on 20th January 2022 returned a majority vote in favour of using the Plan to make decisions on planning applications. The Council is now obliged by statute to make the Neighbourhood Plan unless it considers that doing so would breach European Union obligations (Appendix E).

**9. REPORTS OF THE INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND S151 OFFICER** (Pages 199 - 268)

**(1) Financial Performance 2021-22 - Position at the end of December 2021**

The purpose of the report is to ensure that the Cabinet is informed of the current financial position for the Council against the Budget for 2021-22 (Appendix F).

**(2) Summary of New Capital Proposals considered by Officer Capital Strategy Group**

The report summarises proposed amendments to the Capital Programme considered by the officer Capital Strategy Group via email on 4 February 2022 (Appendix G).

**10. URGENT BUSINESS**

To consider such other business as, in the opinion of the Chair, should by reason of special circumstances, be considered as a matter of urgency.

**PART II**

It is expected that matters included in this part of the Agenda will be dealt with in private. Reports referred to are enclosed for members and officers only, coloured pink and marked "Not for Publication".

**11. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

The Committee is invited to consider passing the following resolution:

- (a) That under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item on the Agenda as it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I of Schedule 12A of the



1972 Act, and

- (b) That the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosure for the following reasons:-

<b>Agenda Items</b>	<b>Paragraph of Part I of Schedule 12A</b>
12-13	1, 2 and 3 (item 12) - Information relating to an individual, information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual, and information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) and para 3 (item 13) - information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)
AND	The public interest in maintaining this exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosure because disclosure would adversely affect the authority's ability to conduct its affairs (Item 12), and disclosure could adversely affect the business reputation or confidence in the person / organisation and could adversely affect commercial revenue (Item 13).

**12. REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ADULTS AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

**RDA Relocation from Tranwell (Pegasus Centre) to Kirkley Hall Campus (Northumberland College)**

To consider a report on the above (Appendix H).

**13. REPORT OF THE INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND SECTION 151 OFFICER**

**Trading Companies' Financial Performance 2021-22 - Position at the end of December 2021**

The purpose of the report is to ensure that the Cabinet is informed of the current financial positions of its trading companies for 2021-22 (Appendix I).

**IF YOU HAVE AN INTEREST AT THIS MEETING, PLEASE:**

- Declare it and give details of its nature before the matter is discussion or as soon as it becomes apparent to you.
- Complete this sheet and pass it to the Democratic Services Officer.

<b>Name (please print):</b>
<b>Meeting:</b>
<b>Date:</b>
<b>Item to which your interest relates:</b>
<b>Nature of Registerable Personal Interest i.e either disclosable pecuniary interest (as defined by Annex 2 to Code of Conduct or other interest (as defined by Annex 3 to Code of Conduct) (please give details):</b>
<b>Nature of Non-registerable Personal Interest (please give details):</b>
<b>Are you intending to withdraw from the meeting?</b>

**1. Registerable Personal Interests** – You may have a Registerable Personal Interest if the issue being discussed in the meeting:

a) relates to any Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (as defined by Annex 1 to the Code of Conduct); or

b) any other interest (as defined by Annex 2 to the Code of Conduct)

The following interests are Disclosable Pecuniary Interests if they are an interest of either you or your spouse or civil partner:

(1) Employment, Office, Companies, Profession or vocation; (2) Sponsorship; (3) Contracts with the Council; (4) Land in the County; (5) Licences in the County; (6) Corporate Tenancies with the Council; or (7) Securities - interests in Companies trading with the Council.

The following are other Registerable Personal Interests:

(1) any body of which you are a member (or in a position of general control or management) to which you are appointed or nominated by the Council; (2) any body which (i) exercises functions of a public nature or (ii) has charitable purposes or (iii) one of whose principal purpose includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union) of which you are a member (or in a position of general control or management ); or (3) any person from whom you have received within the previous three years a gift or hospitality with an estimated value of more than £50 which is attributable to your position as an elected or co-opted member of the Council.

**2. Non-registerable personal interests** - You may have a non-registerable personal interest when you attend a meeting of the Council or Cabinet, or one of their committees or sub-committees, and you are, or ought reasonably to be, aware that a decision in relation to an item of business which is to be transacted might reasonably be regarded as affecting your well being or financial position, or the well being or financial position of a person described below to a greater extent than most inhabitants of the area affected by the decision.

The persons referred to above are: (a) a member of your family; (b) any person with whom you have a close association; or (c) in relation to persons described in (a) and (b), their employer, any firm in which they are a partner, or company of which they are a director or shareholder.

### **3. Non-participation in Council Business**

When you attend a meeting of the Council or Cabinet, or one of their committees or sub-committees, and you are aware that the criteria set out below are satisfied in relation to any matter to be considered, or being considered at that meeting, you must : (a) Declare that fact to the meeting; (b) Not participate (or further participate) in any discussion of the matter at the meeting; (c) Not participate in any vote (or further vote) taken on the matter at the meeting; and (d) Leave the room whilst the matter is being discussed.

The criteria for the purposes of the above paragraph are that: (a) You have a registerable or non-registerable personal interest in the matter which is such that a member of the public knowing the relevant facts would reasonably think it so significant that it is likely to prejudice your judgement of the public interest; **and either** (b) the matter will affect the financial position of yourself or one of the persons or bodies referred to above or in any of your register entries; **or** (c) the matter concerns a request for any permission, licence, consent or registration sought by yourself or any of the persons referred to above or in any of your register entries.

**This guidance is not a complete statement of the rules on declaration of interests which are contained in the Members' Code of Conduct. If in any doubt, please consult the Monitoring Officer or relevant Democratic Services Officer before the meeting.**

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## NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

### CABINET

At a meeting of the **Cabinet** held at County Hall, Morpeth on Tuesday, 8 February 2022 at 10.00 am.

### PRESENT

Councillor G. Sanderson  
(Leader of the Council, in the Chair)

### CABINET MEMBERS

Horncastle, C.  
Pattison, W.

Ploszaj, W.  
Watson, J.G.

### OTHER MEMBERS

Flux, B.

Stewart, G.

### OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Binjal, S.  
Elsdon, A.  
Hadfield, K.

Hunter, P.  
McEvoy-Carr, C.

O'Farrell, R.

Taylor, M.

Willis, J.

Interim Monitoring Officer  
Service Director, Finance  
Democratic and Electoral Services  
Manager  
Interim Senior Service Director  
Executive Director of Children's  
Services and Adult Social Care  
Interim Executive Director of Local  
Services  
Interim Executive Director for  
Communities and Business  
Development  
Interim Executive Director of  
Finance and S151 Officer

## 82. APOLOGIES

Ch.'s Initials.....

Apologies were received from Councillors Renner Thompson, Riddle, Seymour and Wearmouth.

### **83. MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held on 11 January 2022, as circulated, be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

### **84. REPORTS OF THE INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND S151 OFFICER**

#### **(1) Budget 2022-23 and Medium Term Financial Plan 2022-26**

The purpose of the report was to enable the Cabinet to make formal budget recommendations to the County Council. The report provided the Revenue Budget for 2022-23 and Revenue Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) 2022-26 and the Capital Budget for 2022-23 and Capital MTFP 2022-26, following the Government's Spending Round Announcement 2021 (SR 2021), on 27 October 2021, and the publication of the provisional Local Government Finance Settlement on 16 December 2021 (copy attached to the signed minutes, along with the report of the CSEG OSC circulated at the meeting).

Mrs Willis advised members that the final settlement had now been announced by the Government. This contained some very minor changes which had no impact on the overall position. Officers were still working on the detail of this and an update would be provided to members.

The Leader referred to the point made by CSEG OSC regarding housing rents and advised that this point would be picked up. He also informed members about the need for amendments to recommendations 43 and 44 to reflect the delegation to the Cabinet Member rather than the Leader as stated in the report.

**RESOLVED** that:-

(a) Cabinet make the following recommendations to the County Council:

1. Note that the figures contained within the Budget 2022-23 within Appendix 1 are based on the provisional Local Government Finance Settlement of 16 December 2021.
2. Approve the revenue budget for 2022-23 including, the budget balancing target totalling £9.704 million contained within Appendix 1.
3. Note the Revenue MTFP covering the period 2022-26 detailed within Appendix 1 and the requirement to deliver budget balancing measures in both 2023-24 and 2024-25 of £14.000 million and £12.732 million in 2025-26.

4. Note the estimated receipt of Revenue Support Grant of £10.838 million for 2022-23 contained within Appendix 1.
5. Note the estimated retained Business Rates and the Top-Up grant funding to be received by the Council for 2022-23 of £86.801 million and £278.304 million over the remaining period of the MTFP.
6. Note the estimated deficit from prior years on Collection Fund Business Rates balances of £12.547 million in 2022-23 and £0.342 million in 2023-24.
7. Note the estimated receipt of Rural Services Delivery Grant of £2.456 million for 2022-23.
8. Note the estimated receipt of the New Homes Bonus of £3.983 million for 2022-23.
9. Note the total estimated receipt of Improved Better Care Funding grant of £12.495 million for 2022-23.
10. Note the estimated receipt of Social Care grant funding of £13.287 million for 2022-23.
11. Note the estimated receipt of non-recurrent Market Sustainability and Fair Cost of Care Grant of £1.027 million in 2022-23.
12. Note the estimated receipt of non-recurrent Lower Tier Services Grant of £0.451 million in 2022-23.
13. Note the estimated receipt of the non-recurrent Services Grant of £4.751 million in 2022-23.
14. Approve a 1.99% increase in Council Tax for 2022-23, noting that this is in line with the Government's assumptions regarding the Council's Core Spending Power: and, within the Government's referendum limit of 2.00%.
15. Note that the MTFP 2022-26 includes a 1.99% annual increase in Council Tax for the remaining years of the MTFP and, that an estimate of annual tax base growth has been included.
16. Note the non-collection rate for Council Tax purposes remains at 1.00% for 2022-23 (1.00% in 2021-22).
17. Note the estimated surplus and deficit from prior years on the Collection Fund Council Tax balance, comprising a surplus of £4.215 million for 2022-23 and a deficit of £0.554 million for 2023-24.
18. Approve a 1.00% increase in Council Tax for 2022-23 for use on Adult Social Care services; raising an additional £2.119 million to support the Budget 2022-23, and note the assumed increase included in the MTFP of 1.00% for 2023-24 and 2024-25.

19. Approve the remainder of the 3.00% allowed by Government in 2021-22, an increase of 1.25% in Council Tax in 2022-23 for use on Adult Social Care services; raising an additional £2.648 million to support the budget in 2022-23.

20. Approve the Reserves Policy for 2022-23 detailed in Appendix 2.

21. Note the Schedule of Reserves and Provisions contained within Appendix 3.

22. Approve:

(a) the net contributions to the Strategic Management Reserve of £1.587 million in 2022-23 and note the proposed contributions from reserves of £10.216 million in 2023-24, £15.494 million in 2024-25 and £2.953 million in 2025-26, comprising:

- non-recurrent pressures of £3.338 million for 2022-23, and note the non-recurrent pressures totalling £2.834 million in 2023-24; £0.409 million in 2024-25 and £0.909 million in 2025-26 (as detailed within Appendix 8 excluding the Transformation Programme),
- the Active Northumberland Management fee of up to £1.000 million in 2022-23, and note the Active Northumberland Management fee of up to £1.000 million in 2023-24,
- delayed receipt of investment income of £1.025 million in 2022-23; and note that delayed receipt of investment income of £0.513 million is forecast for 2023-24 and that interest of £0.398 million will be repaid into the reserve in 2024-25 and 2025-26 in this respect,
- revenue contribution to capital (RCCO) of £12.231 million in 2024- 25 and £2.442 million in 2025-26 for the Schools' Development Programme,
- contribution to the reserve of £6.950 million in 2022-23 and note the subsequent proposed use of £5.869 million in 2023-24, and £3.252 million in 2024-25 in order to balance the budget.

(b) the use of the Severe Weather Reserve of £2.500 million in 2022-23, to fund the RCCO for the Todstead Landslip project, and

(c) the use of the Contain Outbreak Management Reserve of £0.132 million in 2022-23, to fund the RCCO for the Multi Use Vehicles.

23. Approve the use of the General Fund Reserve: £25.000 million in 2022-23 to be set aside as a voluntary minimum revenue provision (MRP) to enable the Council to repay debt at an appropriate time in the future and note the proposal to use a further £7.850 million in 2024-25 for the same purpose.



24. Approve the use of the Regeneration Additional Capacity Reserve of £0.190 million in 2022-23, to contribute to the funding of Regeneration staffing costs.

25. Approve the use of the Council Transformation Fund Reserve of £3.000 million in 2022-23 and note the use of £3.000 million from this reserve in financial years 2023-24 and 2024-25.

26. Approve the use of the Collection Fund Smoothing reserve of £10.129 million in 2022-23, to part fund the 2021-22 forecast deficit of the Business Rates element of the Collection Fund, and prior year deficits on Business Rates and Council Tax; and note the proposed use of this reserve in 2023-24 to fund £0.896 million Collection Fund deficit; being the final year of the 2020- 21 Council Tax and Business Rates deficits spread over 3 years.

27. Note: a) the Schedule of Service Specific grants of £238.825 million contained within Appendix 4. b) the 2022-23 Public Health grant allocation of £16.891 million contained within Appendix 4, and it's proposed usage.

28. Approve the Inflation Schedule for 2022-23 totalling £19.767 million detailed in Appendix 5.

29. Approve the Recurrent Growth and Pressures Schedule of £8.746 million and the additional revenue costs associated with the Capital Programme of £6.081 million for 2022-23; and note the growth and pressures of £2.609 million in 2023-24; £3.261 million in 2024-25; and, £0.906 million in 2025-26 and the additional revenue costs associated with the capital programme of £5.907 million in 2023-24; £16.878 million in 2024-25; and £5.783 million in 2025-26 included within Appendices 1, 6 and 7.

30. Approve the Non-Recurrent Pressures of £6.338 million for 2022-23 and note the non-recurrent pressures of £5.834 million for 2023-24; £3.409 million for 2024-25 and £0.909 million for 2025-26 included within Appendix 8.

31. Approve the Non-Recurrent Income of £2.770 million for 2022-23 and note the non-recurrent income of £0.466 million for 2023-24 included within Appendix 8.

32. Approve the identified budget balancing measures contained within Appendix 9 of £9.704 million for 2022-23; and note those budget balancing measures totalling £10.466 million already identified for 2023-24 to 2025-26.

33. Note the Corporate Equality Impact Assessment at Appendix 10.

34. Note the Budgets by Service Area 2022-23 detailed in Appendix 11.

35. Note the receipt of Dedicated Schools Grant of £152.123 million in 2022-23; and note the revised allocation of £146.729 million for 2021-22. This is following the conversion of one school to academy status during 2021-22.

36. Agree the Housing Revenue Account 2022-23 budget as detailed within Appendix 12, which will reduce the balance on the HRA reserve from £29.596 million at 31 March 2022, to £22.011 million at 31 March 2023; and note the indicative budgets to 2025-26 which will reduce the balance on the HRA reserve to £16.637 million.

37. Note that from 1 April 2022 in line with the Rent Standard for rent setting for Council tenants, the budget detailed in Appendix 12 assumes that rents and service charges will rise by the Consumer Price Index of 3.10% plus 1.00% for the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023.

38. Approve the increase of 4.10% for Housing rents from 1 April 2022.

39. Note the indicative 30-year Housing Revenue Account business plan as detailed within Appendix 12.

40. Note that £48.221 million has been set aside over the 4-year period 2022-23 to 2025-26 in the HRA Capital Programme to invest in Affordable Housing. Details are set out in Appendix 12.

41. Approve the Capital Strategy 2022-23 to 2025-26 contained within Appendix 13.

42. Approve the revised Capital Programme as detailed within Appendix 14; and the projects highlighted within the main body of the report which will complete after 2025-26; and note the changes in the Capital Programme 2022-26 of £118.380 million detailed in Appendix 15.

43. *"Approve the delegation of the detail of the final Local Transport Programme and any subsequent in-year amendments to the Executive Director responsible for Local Services and the Cabinet Member for Environment and Local Services"*

44. *"Approve the delegation of the detail of the capital allocation for highways maintenance investment in U and C roads and footpaths to the Executive Director responsible for Local Services and the Cabinet Member for Environment and Local Services".*

45. Agree delegation to Cabinet to approve individual projects which propose to utilise the flexibilities of capital receipts.

46. Agree a delegation which enables the Cabinet to approve expenditure and funding for projects (revenue and capital) to be added to the budget which are 100.00% grant funded.

47. Approve the Prudential Indicators based on the proposed Capital Programme detailed within Appendix 16.

48. Approve the Annual Minimum Revenue Provision Policy detailed in Appendix 17.

49. Approve the proposed Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2022-23 detailed in Appendix 18.

50. Approve a delegation to amend the Budget 2022-23 and MTFP in light of any changes as a result of the final Local Government Finance Settlement to the Council's Section 151 Officer in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services; and

(b) the report of the CSEG OSC be accepted.

## **(2) Approval of Revenues and Benefits Policies for 2022-23**

The report updated members on the policies governing the administration of Revenues and Benefits and sought approval for the updates and amendments highlighted (copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix B, along with the report of the CSEG OSC circulated at the meeting).

**RESOLVED** that:-

(a) County Council be recommended to approve the Revenues and Benefits Policies attached as Appendix 1 to Appendix 9 to the report; and

(b) the report of the CSEG OSC be noted.

## **85. REPORT OF THE DEPUTY LEADER**

### **Budget Consultation Report 2022-23**

The report provided a summary of results of the budget consultation undertaken between 10<sup>th</sup> December 2021 and 21<sup>st</sup> January 2022. The budget consultation helped to inform the Council's Budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan (copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix C, along with the report of the CSEG OSC circulated at the meeting).

The Leader thanked all those who had responded to the public consultation. This would be continued, and hopefully, for next year's budget could be done in person.

CSEG OSC had requested that they have sight of the draft questionnaire for next year, which would be done.

**RESOLVED** that:-

(a) the summary results of the budget consultation undertaken between 10<sup>th</sup> December 2021 and 21<sup>st</sup> January 2022, as well as wider engagement undertaken, be noted; and

(b) the report of the CSEG OSC be agreed.

**86. REPORT OF THE REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ADULTS AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

**School Admission Arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools for the 2023/2024 Academic Year**

The report informed Cabinet of the outcomes of the consultation on School Admission Arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools for the 2023/24 Academic Year as required by the School Admissions Code 2021. Approval (determination) of these admission arrangements was also sought (copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix D, along with the report of the FACS OSC on this matter circulated at the meeting).

**RESOLVED** that:-

- (a) the outcomes of the six week consultation undertaken in relation to the Council's proposed admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled schools for 2023/24 that took place between 22nd November 2021 and 18th January 2022 be noted;
- (b) the proposed co-ordinated admission scheme for all maintained schools and academies, as provided in Appendix 1 of the report be approved;
- (c) Cabinet approve (determine) the proposed admission arrangements, including proposed oversubscription criteria and proposed admission numbers for First and Primary community and voluntary and controlled schools, as provided in Appendix 2 of the report;
- (d) Cabinet approve (determine) the proposed admission arrangements, including proposed over subscription criteria and proposed admission numbers, for Middle, High and Secondary community and voluntary controlled schools, including sixth forms, as provided in Appendix 3 of the report;
- (e) Cabinet approve a reduction of the Published Admission Number at Pegswood Primary School from 40 to 30, in view of current and future pupil numbers;
- (f) Cabinet approve a reduction of the Published Admission Number at Seaton Delaval First School from 45 to 30 in recognition that the continuing extent of parental choice in the partnership means that in reality a PAN of 30 is more realistic and sustainable; and
- (g) the report of the FACS OSC be noted.

## **87. REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER**

### **Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service: Community Risk Management Plan 2022-26 Consultation**

The NFRS Community Risk Management Plan 2022-26 was presented as part of the consultation process (copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix E).

**RESOLVED** that Cabinet note the consultation on the Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service Community Risk Management Plan 2022-26 to date.

## **88. REPORT OF THE INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND S151 OFFICER**

### **Summary of New Capital Proposals considered by Officer Capital Strategy Group**

The report summarised proposed amendments to the Capital Programme considered by the officer Capital Strategy Group via email on 7 January 2022 (copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix F).

**RESOLVED** that:-

#### **88.1 Hexham High Street Heritage Action Zone**

Cabinet approve an additional allocation of £835,000 in 2022/23 from the Strategic Regeneration Projects Budget within the Council's 2021-24 Medium Term Financial Plan to invest in public realm works at Eastgate Junction, and along the Priestpottle/Battle Hill corridor at a total scheme cost of £1,447,436.

#### **88.2 Public Convenience Improvements**

- Cabinet approve the allocation of £1,500,000 from the Property Stewardship Fund included in the Council's 2021-24 Medium Term Financial Plan across the public convenience facilities detailed in this report, enabling Property Services to develop an investment plan and a 3 year programme of work aligned with the 3 key themes outlined in the report;
- Cabinet agree that any changes to the proposed programme of toilets identified for refurbishment and modernisation be delegated to the Service Director – Local Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Local Services;
- Cabinet request that particular attention is paid to signage, both physical and virtual, and further consultation is done with Town and Parish Councils regarding the scope for contributions from them to the improvements programme.

### **88.3 Parks Enhancement Projects**

Cabinet approve a maximum Council contribution of £61,660 towards the following schemes to enhance parks in Berwick and Ashington during 2021/22 funded from the Parks Improvement Budget included in the Council's 2021-24 Medium Term Financial Plan:

- Re-lining the Lily pond in Castle Vale and replacement of the gates and reconfiguration of the terracing in Coronation Park in Berwick at a total cost of £20,060 with £17,560 contributed by NCC and £2,500 contributed by the Freemen of Berwick.
- Improvements to the Children's Play area in Wansbeck Riverside Park in Ashington at a total cost of £44,100. An application for grant funding of £21,600 has been submitted to Ashington Leisure Partnership which if successful will reduce NCC's contribution from £44,100 to £22,500.

### **88.4 Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund**

Cabinet approve a proposal to improve energy efficiency across 120 social housing units in Northumberland in 2022/23 subject to receipt of a grant award of £1,193,000 from the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund which will be added to the Capital Budget included in the Councils 2021-24 Medium Term Financial Plan. The Council has put forward the proposed scheme in partnership with Bernicia and Karbon Housing Associations with each organisation providing an element of match-funding for their homes included in the scheme. The Council's contribution of £366,167 towards the work to be carried out on its own stock will be funded through the Housing Revenue Account.

## **89. RECORD OF DECISION TAKEN IN CONSULTATION WITH THE LEADER ON GROUNDS OF URGENCY**

### **Use of Further Covid Related Grants for Adult Social Care**

Cabinet was asked to note a decision taken by the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council (copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix G).

**RESOLVED** that the decision be noted.

## **90. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**RESOLVED**

- (a) That under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items on the Agenda as they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I of Schedule 12A of the 1972 Act, and
- (b) That the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosure for the following reasons:-

<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Paragraph of Part I of Schedule 12A</b>
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12-13	3 Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).
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<b>AND</b>	The public interest in maintaining this exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosure because disclosure at this stage may prejudice the ongoing Transport and Works Act Order process (Item 12), and disclosure could adversely affect the business reputation or confidence in the person/organisation and could adversely affect commercial revenue (Item 13) .
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## **91. REPORT OF THE INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION**

### **The Northumberland Line**

The report provided Cabinet with an update on progress on the Northumberland Line project and recommended acceptance of the final tranche of government funding which would enable the project to move towards delivery (copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix H, coloured pink and marked Not for Publication, along with the report of the CSEG OSC circulated at the meeting).

**RESOLVED** that the recommendation in the report be approved, and the report of the CSEG OSC be noted.

## **92. REPORT OF THE INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITIES AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT**

### **Leisure Review: Extension of Active Northumberland Contract**

The report sought approval to extend the existing contract (copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix I, coloured pink and marked Not for Publication).

**RESOLVED** that the recommendation in the report be approved.

**CHAIR**.....

**DATE**.....





## Northumberland County Council

### **CABINET**

**Date: 8th March 2022**

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### **Final Decision on the Statutory Proposals for Atkinson House**

Report of the Executive Director of Children's Services - Cath McEvoy-Carr  
 Cabinet Member for Children's Services - Councillor Guy Renner-Thompson  
 Report prepared by - Sue Aviston, Head of School Organisation and Resources

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### **Purpose of Report**

This report sets out an analysis of the representations (responses) received from interested parties during the four-week statutory consultation, which began on 13 January and closed on 10 February 2022, on proposals for Atkinson House Special School, Seghill, the secondary provision for boys with Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs (SEMH) in Northumberland. The published statutory proposal set out the following proposed prescribed changes to the school: -

1. To relocate Atkinson House Special School from its current site in Seghill, Northumberland to the former Richard Coates school site in Ponteland, Northumberland with effect from 1 September 2022;
2. To change the designation of the school from single sex to co-educational with effect from 1 September 2022, thus enabling the enrolment of girls onto the school roll;
3. Increasing the planned pupil places at the school from 80 to 100 with effect from 1 September 2022.

Cabinet is asked to make a final decision on whether or not to approve the prescribed changes as set out in the Statutory Proposal for implementation with effect from 1 September 2022.

### **Recommendations**

#### **It is recommended that Cabinet:**

1. Note the Council's statutory proposal published on 13 January 2022 to make prescribed changes to Atkinson House Special School to take effect from 1 September 2022, which is attached at Appendix 1 of this report;

2. Note the responses to the Statutory Proposal and the commentary contained within this report.
3. In the light of all the information provided in this report and taking into account the Statutory Guidance from the Department for Education's (DfE) 'Statutory Guidance for proposers and decision-makers: 'Making significant changes ('prescribed alterations') to maintained schools attached at Appendix 2, approve for implementation the following prescribed alterations to Atkinson House Special School as set out in the statutory proposal:

- **Change in number of pupils in a special school**

The current number of planned pupil places at Atkinson House School is 80. The proposed number of planned pupil places is 100 to take effect from 1 September 2022.

- **Change from single sex school to co-educational**

Atkinson House School currently has provision for boys aged 11 to 16. It is proposed that the school becomes co-educational i.e., admits boys and girls aged 11 to 16, the change to take effect from 1 September 2022.

- **Transfer to a new site**

In order to facilitate the above proposals, transfer the site of Atkinson House School from its current site at Seghill, Northumberland to a new site at the former Richard Coates site in Ponteland, Northumberland, to take effect from 1 September 2022:

The above prescribed alterations were published under Section 19(1) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

4. Note the increase of £122k to meet the Home to School transport costs of this proposal, this increase can be met through the £1m growth in the home to school transport budget. Also note the implications for Home to School Transport of the statutory proposal as set out in para. 28 of the report.
5. Allocate £5.5m from the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan to accommodate the capital costs as set out in para. 32 necessary to support the implementation of the prescribed changes set out in Recommendation 3 above.
6. Approve the implementation of the proposed building solution set out in para. 32 of this report.

All of the above conditional upon:

- the granting of planning permission by 31 August 2022 in relation to the proposed building works;

## **Link to Corporate Plan**

These proposals are most closely linked to the Council's priority for Learning (achieving and realising potential, but it is also strongly linked with the priority for Connecting (having access to the things you need).

## **Key Issues**

1. At its 11 January 2022 meeting, Cabinet approved the publication of a statutory proposal on 13 January 2022 setting out prescribed changes to Atkinson House proposed to take effect from 1 September 2022. This decision was made following the six-week informal consultation on the proposed changes for the school that took place between 13 October 2021 and closed on 1 December 2021 (all during school term-time).
2. The rationale for the proposal and the outcomes of the informal consultation are set out in the Executive Director of Adult Social Care and Children's Services Report of 11 January 2022, included in the Background Papers to this report. A summary of the informal consultation is provided at paras. 8-13 of this report. This statutory proposal is not related to any other proposals.
3. The statutory proposal was published on the Council's website and a brief notice placed in the Morpeth Herald on 13 January 2022 in line with statutory guidance set out in the DfE's 'Statutory Guidance for proposers and decision-makers: 'Making significant changes ('prescribed alterations') to maintained schools attached at Appendix 2. Copies of the statutory proposal were sent to the required interested parties set out in the guidance within one week of the publication. The publication of the statutory proposal opened a 4-week period of formal statutory consultation that closed at midnight on 10 February 2022. During this time all interested parties were invited to submit comments in the form of written representations, including support of or objections to the proposal by the required deadline of midnight on 10 February 2022 in line with statutory requirements. No meetings on formally published proposals take place during the statutory period.
4. 111 representations were received by the deadline in response to the Statutory Proposal, falling into the following groups:
  - 12 Parents of students on the roll of Atkinson House School
  - 22 Parents of pupils on roll in Ponteland schools and Little Tinklers nursery
  - 26 Staff of Atkinson House School
  - Governing Body of Atkinson House Special School
  - 6 Pele Trust Governance and Leadership related (Directors, Headteacher of Richard Coates CE Primary, 4 Governors of Richard Coates CE Primary School)
  - Newcastle Diocesan Education Board
  - 2 Other education professionals
  - 1 other local authority (Newcastle City Council)
  - Ponteland Town Council
  - 17 Residents of Ponteland
  - 22 respondents did not identify themselves within a specific stakeholder group
5. The representations received have been taken into account by officers when forming the recommendations set out in this report. The main comments and themes submitted by interested parties during the statutory period are set out in paras. 15 to 24 in this report with commentary, while the full representations are included in Appendix 3 as a link from this report.
6. In making their decision, Cabinet are able to:

- reject the proposal;
- approve the proposal (with or without modification) conditional upon the granting of planning permission by 31 August 2022 in relation to the proposed building works at the former Richard Coates site. If Cabinet decide to make a modification to the proposal, this must be made after consultation with the Governing Body of Atkinson House Special School.

Cabinet should note that within the statutory guidance, the decision-maker is recommended to *“not simply take account of the numbers of people expressing a particular view. Instead, they should give the greatest weight to responses from those stakeholders likely to be most affected by the proposal – especially parents of children at the affected school(s).”* Cabinet should also note that the purpose of the statutory consultation was to seek the views of interested parties on a qualitative basis in relation to the robustness of the proposals educationally in order to inform the decision-making process of the Council’s Cabinet. Therefore, it is not the intention that these results are used as a referendum on the proposal. In the light of the rationale for the proposal and in consideration of feedback received during the informal consultation and the statutory period, Cabinet are recommended to approve the proposals.

7. Cabinet should note that the decision on the proposals set out in this report must be made by no later than 10 April 2022 or else must be referred to the Schools Adjudicator for a decision. Furthermore, whether or not Cabinet approves the proposals set out in this report, the following bodies have the right to appeal the decision:

- The Church of England Diocese of Newcastle
- The Roman Catholic Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle

Atkinson House Special School is a community special school, and Governors therefore do not have rights of appeal to the Schools Adjudicator.

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

### **Summary of Rationale and Informal Consultation**

8. On 12 October 2021, Cabinet approved the commencement of informal consultation on proposals to relocate Atkinson House Special School to the former Richard Coates building in Ponteland, to change the designation of the school from single sex to co-educational in order to admit girls and to increase the number of planned places at the school from 80 to 100. In line with DfE guidance, a six-week informal consultation commenced on 13 October and closed on 1 December 2021.
9. The rationale for the proposals are detailed in the Report of the Executive Director of Adult Social Care and Children’s Services of 12 October 2021 and 11 January 2022.

In summary, the rationale for the proposals is:

- The number of children and young people being diagnosed with special educational needs in Northumberland has been increasing year on year for the past 10 years, equating to an average increase in demand for special school places over this period of 7% each year. Demand from parents for their children to be educated within special school provision continues to grow and nationally there are significant

financial pressures on mainstream schools in supporting SEND provision, for example schools fund the first £6k of support for each SEND learner with an EHCP.

- Within these numbers, there has been a significant increase in the number of children and young people who have been identified with a primary special need of autism and/or social emotional and mental health needs. Northumberland has been successful in bidding for a special free school, the Gilbert Ward Academy constructed through the DfE's free school programme for secondary age young people who have autism and social, emotional and mental health needs but this will not be completed until early 2023. The Dales School in Blyth and Ashington and Hillcrest School in Cramlington have also both had their provision increased recently. The next available school to expand to meet demand would be Atkinson House Special School. However, there is also a growing demand for SEMH provision for girls in Northumberland from Year 7 onwards.
  - The delay in the opening of the Gilbert Ward Academy and the increasing demand outlined above evidences the need for additional SEMH places across the county. It is therefore proposed by relocating Atkinson House to the vacant former Richard Coates CE Primary School building in Ponteland, additional capacity would be available on an ongoing basis, rather than spending additional funding on temporary arrangements to meet demand in the interim. The additional capacity at the proposed site for Atkinson House Special School would also enable the school to expand its provision by moving from a single sex provision to co-educational, thus supporting the growing demand from girls diagnosed with SEMH in the county.
10. Informal consultation commenced on 13 October until 1 December 2021, a six-week period in school term-time, which is in line with DfE guidance. In line with all informal consultation, the intention was to gauge the views of all stakeholders but especially those most affected by the proposals, in particular those views of the parents of Atkinson House Special School as the affected school. In short, informal consultation in relation to schools is not a referendum but an opportunity to consider all views and on balance consider what is in the best educational interests of the students most impacted, in this case those of Atkinson House Special School, whilst being mindful of the impact on other parties.
11. A consultation document, including a questionnaire, was drawn up which set out the rationale, background information and implications of the proposal. This document was circulated directly to parents, staff, Governors and other stakeholders. The document was also published on the Council's website, on Twitter and Facebook and a notice highlighting the consultation displayed in the local library at Ponteland. Virtual meetings with key stakeholders took place, and although a public-facing event was not able to take place due to rising COVID cases at the time of the consultation, a 'padlet' containing the proposals and other background information was set up to assist consultees in formulating their views.
12. The full outcomes of the approved informal consultation, analysis and commentary on feedback received from consultees are provided in the Report of the Executive Director of Adult Social Care and Children's Services 11 January 2022. In summary, feedback from consultees was as follows:
- The Governing Body of Atkinson House Special School, and the staff, parents and students on role at the school who responded were all in favour of the proposals.

- The Pele Trust and The Newcastle Diocesan Education Board did not support the proposals in the light of their safeguarding concerns in relation to the shared site with Richard Coates CE Primary.
  - Little Tinklers nursery, which is also located close to the former Richard Coates building, also discussed concerns about safeguarding during the meeting with NCC officers, although a written response was not received.
  - Ponteland Town Council did not support the proposals in the light of their concerns with the location and its potential impact on local schools and residents in relation to increased traffic.
  - Of the 2,016 electronic consultation documents sent out directly to consultees, 305 responses were received. Most responses received from stakeholders linked to Atkinson House Special School supported the proposal to relocate, whereas most of the responses received from stakeholders linked to the Pele Trust, Little Tinklers nursery and residents were not in favour of the relocation. The responses for and against the proposal regarding Atkinson House Special School becoming co-educational were closer, with those not in favour slightly ahead of those in favour.
13. In the light of the educational rationale for the proposals, Cabinet approved the publication of the statutory proposal on 13 January 2022 as set out in the Key Issues of this report. However, during the statutory period officers have met with representatives of the Pele Trust to agree safeguarding measures that would be put in place should the proposal be approved for implementation. These are set out in para. 32.

### **Representations submitted during the statutory period and commentary**

14. Following the publication of the statutory proposal, the Executive Director of Adult Social Care and Children's Services received 111 representations. Table 1 indicates the interested parties from whom representations were received and their response:

**Table 1**

<b>Respondent type</b>	<b>Support proposals</b>	<b>Object to proposals</b>
• 12 Parents of Atkinson House Special School	12	-
• Governing Body of Atkinson House Special School	1	-
• 26 Staff of Atkinson House Special School, including Headteacher of Atkinson House	26	-
• 22 Parents of schools in Ponteland, including Richard Coates CE Primary School	1	20
	1 parent submitted comments only – no clear statement in favour of or against the proposal	
• Pele Trust Leadership and Governance (Directors response; Headteacher, Richard	-	5

Coates CE Primary School; 3 Governors of Richard Coates CE Primary School		
• Other education professionals	-	2
• Newcastle City Council	1	-
• Newcastle Diocesan Education Board	-	1
• Ponteland Town Council	Comments received only – no clear statement made in favour of or against the proposal	
• 17 Ponteland residents	-	17
• 23 Responses from people who did not identify themselves specifically with a stakeholder group	2	21
<b>Total</b>	<b>43*</b>	<b>66*</b>

*\*Note: As Ponteland Town Council submitted comments only and did not specifically state they were for or against the proposals, they are not counted in total number 'For' or 'Against'.*

As highlighted at para. 6, Cabinet should note that the purpose of the statutory consultation was to seek the views of interested parties on a qualitative basis in relation to the robustness of the proposals educationally in order to inform the decision-making process of the Council's Cabinet. Therefore, it is not the intention that these results are used as a referendum on the proposal.

### **Summary of representations, themes arising and commentary**

#### **15. Summary of responses from parents of students on roll at Atkinson House Special School:**

- Larger site will enable bespoke choices and a tailored curriculum and therapeutic offer;
- The change to co-educational would create positive opportunities for boys and girls to improve interaction, social development and skills, and academic skills;
- Opportunity for girls [with SEMH] to attend a school that best meets their needs;
- A new site will offer better facilities and more rooms for nurturing and customised education;

#### *Commentary*

All representations received during the statutory period from the parents of students on roll at Atkinson House support the proposals. It is notable that parents believe that not only the site would be more beneficial to their children, but that they believe the inclusion of girls in the school would improve their son's social and academic skills.

While 12 representations were received from parents/carers of Atkinson House students, Cabinet should note that some Atkinson House student's parents are

unused to responding formally in writing to statutory consultation such as this and are reminded that of the 48 responses received from this group of parents during informal consultation via the online questionnaire, 44 supported the relocation and 39 supported co-education.

16. Summary of Response from Atkinson House Special School Governing Body

- The Governing Body is committed to working in partnership with the LA to ensure we provide the best possible environment and outcomes for our students.
- Governing Body confirms it is fully supportive of the proposed relocation to Ponteland and the transition to provide co-educational provision.
- Subject to formal approval, we look forward to the delivery of a successful project in September 2022 and the proposed future developments at the site to ensure we have a world class leading facility for the young people who require our support.

*Commentary*

The Governing Body's continuing support of the proposals for the school is noted.

17. Summary of Response from headteacher of Atkinson House Special School

- The Local Authority must support students with additional needs as a priority to enable an inclusive offer;
- The former Richard Coates site offers value for money as it is structurally ready as a school;
- Confident Atkinson House can develop world class facilities for boys and girls across Northumberland with SEMH needs;
- Hope to work with all partners to be creative and inclusive with the right, positive welcoming mindset.

*Commentary*

The Headteacher of Atkinson House Special School continues to support the rationale for relocating the school and is also confident that the school can adapt to meet the needs of girls as well as boys. Should the proposal be implemented, it is hoped that all partners, would work collaboratively in the best interests of all children and young people.

18. Summary of Responses from staff of Atkinson House Special School

- Atkinson House has the right management structure and expertise to meet the needs of an expanding school.
- Co-education in SEMH setting offers positive opportunities for interaction and social development. Currently no SEMH provision in county for girls.
- Relocation will enable larger number of pupils able to be accommodated to cater for growing numbers and bespoke design choices, so curriculum and therapeutic offer can be better tailored including Modern Foreign Languages and Humanities.
- Atkinson House support and guidance is second to none, exam entries improving year on year.
- Current premises of Atkinson House inadequate/not fit for purpose for much of strategic vision and not best location. Pupils deserve access to provision that meets their needs.



- Larger building will assist pupils in dealing with social situations more effectively.
- Opposition to the proposals stems from fear of unknown and negative stereotypes of our students.
- Want to forge links with wider community and support them to understand the work we do, e.g., learn Atkinson House is not a 'naughty boy school' or other derogatory terms they have called us, but a school for children with special needs and the positive effects we have on their lives daily.
- Space for more 1:1 work where it's needed. Larger school will assist with growing number of students with ASD.
- Staff and students work tirelessly and have outstanding respect, relationships and trust for each other therefore want to offer them the best opportunity to flourish and grow and move forward in the community without prejudice or made to feel different to pupils in 'normal' mainstream settings.

#### *Commentary*

The comments of staff support the rationale for the proposal that in order to accommodate the growing number of children and young people in the county with SEMH needs, a larger building for Atkinson House Special School is required. Equally staff support the rationale to offer provision to girls in Northumberland with SEMH needs as there is currently no dedicated provision.

#### 19. Summary of responses from parents in other schools and settings in Ponteland

- Hope this gets the go-ahead, every child deserves an equal chance.
- Traffic issues won't be as bad as when the middle and first school were at the site; parents can use 2 large car parks nearby;
- Concern that traffic and pollution will be increased by relocation of Atkinson House
- Concern younger children in adjacent settings will be exposed to bad language and behaviour;
- The needs of the Atkinson House students should not be met to the detriment of the children in adjacent settings;
- Concerns over safeguarding; Atkinson House students will be able to climb fences; will incidents spill over into other settings; how will safeguarding be achieved?;
- Richard Coates CE Primary will be impacted negatively, numbers already falling and this proposal could mean parents take children out of school
- Understand need for more places for SEMH students, but Ponteland is not the right place, nice quiet village.
- Proposal to use Atkinson House rushed, why not consider other locations e.g., former Hexham Middle site.

#### *Commentary*

Most of the representations from parents that oppose the proposals have been submitted by parents of pupils on roll in Richard Coates CE Primary and Little Tinklers nursery as these settings are adjacent to the former Richard Coates building. However, there has been some support of the proposals from a parent of another school in Ponteland who has a child with special educational needs.

Safeguarding of pupils attending Richard Coates CE Primary and Little Tinklers Nursery is the main concern raised by parents of children attending these settings. As this was also a key concern raised during informal consultation, Council officers have met with representatives of the Pele Trust during the statutory period to understand the latter's concerns in more site-specific detail and to formulate solutions that would address these concerns. As a result of the meetings, it is proposed that both schools have their own dedicated site without any sharing of playfields, car parking or external hardstanding areas. Fences that would provide an acoustic barrier, at an appropriate height together with landscaping to provide physical separation between the two schools were favoured by the Trust representatives to address their safeguarding concerns.

As well as the physical changes that can be made to the former Richard Coates site and building to ensure segregation between Atkinson House and Richard Coates Schools, it is envisaged that the headteachers of the schools could work together to implement other safeguarding measures, such as staggering the start and end of the school day at each site. A more detailed summary of the work undertaken between NCC officers and Pele Trust representatives so far is provided at para. 32.

In relation to the impact on traffic should the proposals be approved, it was clarified in the Report of the Executive Director of Adult Social Care and Children's Services on 11 January 2022 that all students on roll at Atkinson House Special School are entitled to home to school transport and are currently transported to school in taxis, save 2 students (one of whom lives around the corner from school and the other is given a lift by a parent as they live close by). As most of the students share the taxis, there are currently around 17 taxis arriving on site twice a day; with the increase in planned places proposed for the school this number would increase but it is unlikely to be significant. It should also be noted that secure on site drop off and pick up arrangements will be in place, avoiding the need for any drop off arrangements being required outside of the school site.

As also reported previously, the headteacher of Atkinson House Special School has already agreed to ensure that the taxis transporting his students would enter the top entrance of the site which is not shared with the other settings from the north end of Thornhill Road. This should avoid adding to the congestion that already appears to exist from traffic entering and leaving at the south end of Thornhill Road.

It was also referenced in the previous report that prior to becoming a two-form entry (420 places) primary school, Richard Coates CE Primary was a 480 places middle school on its former site adjacent to Ponteland First School (as it was), which had capacity for 300 pupils. Therefore, prior to reorganisation there were 780 pupils attending the shared site (not including the nursery), with buses transporting many of the Richard Coates pupils. It may be that concerns around this proposal in relation to increased traffic have been made in the light of the previous level of traffic when the school was a middle school; this included 6 buses and mini buses of a size to transport almost 190 students that parked in a layby on Thornhill Road to drop off Richard Coates students, some of which then carried out to Ponteland High School. Additionally, a number of parents transporting their children to Richard Coates by car would have also parked in the area around the school.

Therefore, it is clear that the number of students attending Atkinson House and the way in which they are transported directly onto site in taxis would have far less impact on existing education settings and the local community should the proposal be approved than under the previous organisation of schools. Furthermore, should this proposal not be implemented, the former Richard Coates site would be developed in some way, either by the council to accommodate another service or sold for development, therefore it is inevitable that additional traffic would be generated at the site whatever the redevelopment solution.

In relation to comments suggesting there would be an impact on pupils at Richard Coates CE Primary and Little Tinklers nursery, Cabinet as the decision-maker will consider in the first instance whether the rationale for the proposals for current and future students of Atkinson House Special School under statutory consultation remain appropriate. However, Cabinet will also take into consideration whether there would be a risk of negative impact on other pupils attending schools and settings in the local area should the proposals be implemented, to what extent and whether ameliorating measures could be put in place to overcome such impact. However, with the appropriate safeguarding measures put in place as agreed in meetings with the Pele Trust representatives during the statutory period, set out in detail in para. 32 of this report, these can now be communicated to parents. It is hoped that this will now provide the required reassurance to parents of Richard Coates, Little Tinklers and Atkinson House that their children are safe and secure in their relevant schools should the proposals be implemented. Furthermore, there are no current concerns with the viability of Richard Coates as it remains popular with parents, especially those living out of county; this is evidenced by the fact that applications for places in Reception classes for September 2022 remain at previous levels.

Ponteland Partnership is one of the four partnerships in the county that currently do not have any specialist provision either as a stand-alone special school or as part of a mainstream school. Ponteland is close to excellent road systems that mean it can be easily accessed from all parts of the county. It is therefore unclear why some respondents believe either the Richard Coates site or Ponteland would not be a suitable location for specialist provision compared to other places in the county in relation to its location.

In relation to the proposal being rushed without consideration of other sites, the availability of the former Richard Coates building has presented an opportunity for the expansion of Atkinson House Special School in relation to increasing its planned places and to include provision for girls and for implementation by September 2022 when additional places are required. However, there is a clear rationale behind the proposal to relocate to the former Richard Coates building, as it is based in a fairly central position within the county in relation to Northumberland's population it is in close proximity to excellent road systems. It also offers the opportunity to serve the west of the county more effectively. While the former Hexham Middle School is available, it is significantly further west than Ponteland and would require the majority of Atkinson House students to travel much further on home to school transport. Kirkley Hall site has also been suggested by some respondents to the consultation, as an alternative site but given the site isn't in the ownership of NCC, it wouldn't be possible to consider this as an option.

## 20. Summary of response from Newcastle City Council

- Agree there is a growing demand for school places for children with special educational needs;
- In recent years there has been increasing demand for specialist places for girls with ASD and SEMH needs;
- Newcastle City Council supports these proposals.

### *Commentary*

Newcastle City Council's comments are noted and support the implementation of the proposals to address the growing need for additional SEND places nationally, as well as in Northumberland.

## 21. Summary of responses from Pele Trust Directors, Headteacher of Richard Coates CE Primary and Governors of Richard Coates CE Primary – all part of the Pele Trust

### *Directors comments*

- Pele Trust acknowledged the work undertaken by NCC officers with representatives of the trust during the statutory period to understand the concerns of the trust in relation to the proposals and to discuss options for mitigating those concerns.
- However, the Pele Trust Directors continue to believe that the proposals are not acceptable or in the best interests of either Atkinson House Special School or Richard Coates CE Primary for the following reasons:
  - Lack of examples of SEMH secondary provision co-located with primary schools other than Lichfield [Longdon Hall School and Lichfield Cathedral Junior School] supports view that the proposal presents an unusually high level of risk;
  - Inability to share facilities because it would be inappropriate and recommendation for 3m fencing when 1.8m is the norm between schools will create significant concerns for prospective parents visiting Richard Coates.
  - Primary Multi Use Games Area will be reduced significantly and relocated to an area that could cause distractions to Yr6 learning through noise. Work required will cause disruption to daily operation of the primary.
  - The level of mitigations required may undermine aims of Atkinson House leadership team by being 'fenced in' re 3m fences and could be counterproductive.
  - Few schools share sites and NCC has vacant sites that would be more appropriate for SEMH provision.
  - Concerns as a result of parental communication that there will be a detrimental impact on Richard Coates CE Primary as a result of reputational damage impacting on pupil numbers and thus school budget.
  - Nothing has been communicated during the consultation period to allay fears of parents if proposals go ahead, with many suggesting they would remove their children.
  - Pele Trust Directors remain committed to working with NCC in the best interests of all children.

#### *Headteacher of Richard Coates CE Primary comments*

- Identifying the former Richard Coates building as a site for the relocation of Atkinson House Special school is just a quick and easy solution and not based on the needs of the school's students as:
  - It is not suitable for students with mobility challenges even operating on the lower floor, no lift and steep access staircases. Accessibility in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is a basic right and another example of how the site is an easy solution rather than forward thinking given to what is right for students.
  - Complete segregation of Richard Coates CE Primary from Atkinson House Special School and a staggered start for the schools is essential to manage safeguarding.
  - NCC has not shared with parents of Richard Coates or local residents how the model would work in practice.

#### *Governors of Richard Coates CE Primary comments*

- A firm undertaking to agree safeguarding provisions with Pele Trust should be included in any agreement. Hope Council reconsiders this proposal at a safer location.
- Little concern shown or understanding of how proposed move will affect Little Tinkler's and Richard Coates and residents on Thornhill Road.
- Safeguarding is paramount – any incident would be serious and impact the guardian.
- Other options such as Kirkley Hall have not been considered.
- Firmly believe many given the responsibility for making the decision may not have exerted the time and energy in considering the documentation provided and concerns eloquently made by Mr McGrane and Mrs Cape.
- Will impact future admissions into Richard Coates CE Primary and Little Tinklers nursery.
- SEMH schools are important, objecting because of proximity to other schools.

#### *Commentary*

The acknowledgement of the Pele Trust that NCC officers have been keen to understand their concerns and to suggest mitigation is welcomed. However, the suggestion of the Pele Trust that a lack of examples of co-location of SEMH schools with primary schools supports the view that such an arrangement equates to a high level of risk is unfounded. Indeed, in the light of the numbers of children and young people presenting with special needs of this nature continuing to grow, the Council will look to set this type of integrated approach of specialist provision with mainstream provision as a principle going forward.

Officers have listened to the concerns of Pele Trust and as a result of these meetings plans for the site have been developed to provide total separation between the two schools with the appropriate physical demarcation, as well as operational practices. It is agreed that in the past, schools were constructed as stand-alone buildings. However, in recent years more schools across the country are becoming co-located (e.g., over 35 schools in Northumberland operate on co-located/shared sites), and in the future this is more likely to include co-location and integration of specialist provision with mainstream provision given the continuing rise of children with special educational needs.

The safeguarding measures agreed with the Pele Trust at their meetings with NCC officers, including the suggestion of a 3m high fence, were in response to the concerns raised by the Pele Trust. Furthermore, it is DfE guidance that fences constructed around special schools, should be at a minimum of 2.4m in height to assist with the safeguarding of those students. These meetings are also evidential that the concerns of the schools, parents and residents in relation to safeguarding have been taken seriously and demonstrate an intent to resolve concerns to the satisfaction of all parties.

Should these proposals be approved, this would not result in a 'shared' site arrangement between Atkinson House Special School and Richard Coates CE Primary, rather the two schools would be adjacent with clearly marked boundaries and no shared usage of any facilities – it is envisaged this arrangement would be preferable in any event given the representations received from parents of Richard Coates and Little Tinklers to this statutory consultation. Students of Atkinson House would enter school in their taxis via the top entrance to the building and the gates would be closed once all pupils are on site. Outside space would also be completely separated, with the required fencing and planting in place.

The Pele Trust's concern that there could be a detrimental impact on Richard Coates CE Primary should Atkinson House relocate are noted. As noted in para. 19, with the appropriate safeguarding measures put in place as agreed in meetings with the Pele Trust representatives during the statutory period, as noted above and set out in detail in para. 32 of this report, these can now be communicated to parents. It is hoped that this will now provide the required reassurance to parents of Richard Coates, Little Tinklers and Atkinson House that their children are safe and secure in their relevant schools should the proposals be implemented. Furthermore, there are no current concerns with the viability of Richard Coates as it remains popular with parents, especially those living out of county; this is evidenced by the fact that applications for places in Reception classes for September 2022 remain at previous levels.

In relation to concerns of the suitability of the former Richard Coates building for Atkinson House Special School students, it can be confirmed that only the lower ground of the building would be used by the school. The Council is aware of its duties under the Disability Discrimination Act to ensure that the building would be made accessible to people with a disability.

As also stated in para. 19, it is true that the availability of the former Richard Coates building has provided an opportunity for Atkinson House Special School to expand the number of students it can educate and extend its designation to include girls. However, the rationale behind the proposal is based on the location of the building being fairly central to the county in relation to population and with close proximity to excellent networks, and also offering the opportunity to serve the west of the county more effectively. While the Pele Trust Governor suggests that Kirkley Hall for example could be considered, the latter forms part of Northumberland College and is therefore outside of the control of the Council.

22. Summary of response from Newcastle Church of England Diocesan Education Board (NDEB)

- NDEB's request for information in relation to how safeguarding would be implemented at the site has not been fully fulfilled, although we are aware of the meetings between NCC and Pele Trust representatives which we believe have been productive.
- NDEB recognises the growing need for specialist provision and supports the right provision at the most suitable location. Also recognise need for provision for girls.
- Access to all 3 buildings on site is openly linked and difficult to segregate without significant work. NDEB wishes to understand what safeguarding measures would be put in place.
- Sadly, aware from visit of Pele Trust representatives to Atkinson House in November of several concerns, (informal smoking area, inappropriate language and students jumping over walls and to our knowledge concerns remain in place).
- As do not yet understand how safeguarding concerns highlighted would be mitigated, unable to support the proposal as it stands.

#### *Commentary*

NDEB's position in relation to the statutory proposal is noted. The specific incidents that were relayed to NDEB by Pele Trust representatives following their visit to Atkinson House and that have caused concern have been taken into consideration when developing the safeguarding mitigations proposed to be put in place at the school should the proposals be approved. These mitigations were agreed with the Pele Trust at the meetings NDEB was made aware of according to their submission and a summary is included at para. 31.

### 23. Summary of representation from Ponteland Town Council

- Noted that large number of responses from previous [informal] consultation were against the proposal.
- Recognise need for additional provision for children with SEMH needs but proposal seems rushed, and no alternatives considered.
- Comments from PTCs previous response still relevant i.e., concerns around safeguarding, use of shared space, impact on adjacent school.
- Loss of garage facility at Atkinson House Seghill site if move could impact on students.
- Responses from Pele Trust and NDEB concerned safeguarding, need acceptable way forward for all concerned.
- Potential cost of £2.5m noted – why can't this be delayed until Gilbert Ward facility opens in 2023 as may have spare capacity.
- Transport costs will increase; also seek assurance Headteacher of Atkinson House agreement re transport of students onto site is agreed and adopted.
- Hope additional traffic generated would not impact on local residents.
- PTC request reassurance that various issues outlined dealt with prior to the school opening in Ponteland if proposals go ahead.

#### *Commentary*

The reasons why the former Richard Coates building would be suitable for Atkinson House subject to relevant suitability works taking place and the need to have SEMH

places available for September 2022 are set out in the Reports of the Executive Director of Adult Social Care and Children's Services of 13 October 2021 and 11 January 2022. A summary of the proposed mitigations agreed at meetings with the Pele Trust representatives during the statutory period in response to their safeguarding concerns is set out in para. 32.

24. Summary of representations from residents and respondents who did not identify specifically with a stakeholder group

- Fully support/welcome move, provision for SEMH never more needed; will enable boys and girls in Northumberland to gain qualifications and skills for success in adulthood.
- Recognise need for provision for SEMH pupils but shouldn't be to detriment of children at other schools; decision rushed; should be at alternative location.
- Solution to use former Richard Coates building too simplistic; consider other sites e.g., Hexham Middle building.
- Decision to change location should be delayed until Gilbert Ward facility opens in 2023;
- Increase in traffic [if Atkinson House relocates] will increase congestion and pollution;
- Safeguarding concerns for children attending Richard Coates Primary and Little Tinklers nursery; how will Atkinson students be contained?
- Increasing intake and moving to co-educational unsettling for pupils, shouldn't happen at the same time.
- Vulnerable adults near school site, not putting "Residents First" concerned about increase in anti-social behaviour.
- Council needs to think about what is best for all pupils.

*Commentary*

The majority of representations from residents and people who did not specify their interest group share similar concerns around the proposals as parents of children attending Richard Coates and Little Tinklers, namely safeguarding, traffic and understanding need for SEMH places but not in Ponteland – refer to para. 19 commentary.

Some respondents within this group also expressed concern for the wellbeing of vulnerable adults in the residential area close to the school. Para. 31 sets out a summary of how safeguarding issues are proposed to be addressed at the former Richard Coates site should the proposal be approved in order to address concerns raised by the adjacent education settings and the local community. For information, there have been no police incidents in the community involving students of Atkinson House Special School within the last three years under the leadership of the current headteacher.

As stated in para. 19, the availability of the former Richard Coates building has presented an opportunity for the expansion of Atkinson House Special School in relation to increasing its planned places and to include provision for girls and for implementation by September 2022 when additional places are required. However, there is a clear rationale behind the proposal to relocate to the former Richard



Coates building, as it is based in a fairly central position within the county in relation to Northumberland's population it is in close proximity to excellent road systems. It also offers the opportunity to serve the west of the county more effectively. While the former Hexham Middle School is available, it is significantly further west than Ponteland and would require the majority of Atkinson House students to travel much further on home to school transport.

A very small number of respondents in this group support the proposal, echoing the comments of parents of students in Atkinson House Special School and its staff.

## **Conclusion and recommendation**

25. There has been a robust response to the statutory proposal published on 13 January, with 111 representations received from a wide variety of groups.

### Educational Rationale

The primary reason for the proposals to relocate Atkinson House Special School is to provide additional spaces for the growing cohort of both boys and girls in Northumberland who are presenting with SEMH, particularly in relation to girls for whom there is currently no dedicated SEMH provision in the county. There is a desire to have this provision in place for September 2022 in light of the delay to the opening of the Gilbert Ward Academy and to uphold the corporate objective to educate our young people as close to their home areas as possible in order to reduce the need for out of county placements that lead to long travel times for students and increased costs.

The relocation to the former Richard Coates site would enable the required growth in provision of SEMH places for all young people in the county with additional space to tailor the existing curriculum to the needs of students and could be in place for September 2022 if approved. The representations received from the parents of students at Atkinson House, the Governing Body of the school, headteacher and the staff who responded all agree that it would be in the best educational interests of the students for these proposals to be implemented.

Para. 26 provides further information in relation to educational standards.

### Impact of the proposal

The foremost groups impacted by this proposal are the students of Atkinson House Special School and their parents and carers, as well as the staff of the school who would have to prepare carefully for the relocation should it be approved. However, in the light of their representations it appears they are prepared to accept the work involved in relocation in order for the current cohort of students and future cohorts, including girls, to benefit.

The concerns of the Pele Trust Directors, Headteacher of Richard Coates CE Primary and the Governors of the school, and parents of pupils at this school and Little Tinklers nursery who responded also need to be considered. They have raised a number of safeguarding concerns at both informal consultation and statutory consultation phases. Similar safeguarding concerns have been raised by residents and the group of respondents who did not specifically identify their interest in the proposals. However, as set out in para 13, in the light of these concerns NCC officers

organised meetings with Pele Trust representatives during the statutory period to ascertain the specific reasons for these concerns. At these meetings, a range of safeguarding measures were agreed with the Pele Trust should the proposal be approved for implementation. These are set out in para. 31 and has resulted in there being a plan to have no shared areas between Atkinson House Special School and specific arrangements for fencing and landscaping to provide segregation between the two sites. It is envisaged that this collaborative approach would continue, to address any further concerns should the proposals be approved.

Concerns with an increase in traffic and pollution were highlighted by many of the respondents linked to schools and nursery on Thornhill Road and residents in response to the statutory consultation. Para. 19 sets out how the level of traffic experienced by schools and residents on Thornhill Road prior to reorganisation to the 2-tier system in 2017 was much greater than would be experienced should these proposals be implemented. Furthermore, the headteacher of Atkinson House Special School has also agreed to ensure that taxis transporting students would enter the top entrance to the site at the opposite end of Thornhill Road to the junction mainly used by school traffic generated by parents of pupils attending Richard Coates CE Primary and Little Tinklers nursery.

### Conclusion

As noted in para. 6 of this report, Cabinet should note that within the statutory guidance, the decision-maker is recommended to *“not simply take account of the numbers of people expressing a particular view. Instead, they should give the greatest weight to responses from those stakeholders likely to be most affected by the proposal – especially parents of children at the affected school(s).”* Cabinet should also note that the purpose of the statutory consultation was to seek the views of interested parties on a qualitative basis in relation to the robustness of the proposals educationally in order to inform the decision-making process of the Council's Cabinet. In short, it is not the intention that these results should be used as a referendum on the proposals.

Therefore, in the light of the educational rationale for the proposals, whilst being cognisant of the feedback and concerns of all stakeholders received during the informal consultation and the statutory period, Cabinet are recommended to approve the proposals to be implemented to take effect from 1 September 2022.

### **Education Standards and diversity of provision**

26. As the proposal to relocate Atkinson House Special School to the former Richard Coates site includes a proposal to increase the planned pupil numbers and extend provision to include girls with SEMH, more young people would be able to benefit from the specialist SEMH provision at the school. It is envisaged that this would enable more young people in Northumberland to achieve better outcomes, including the opportunity for more students to take more GCSE qualifications, thus reducing the attainment gap between a disadvantaged group of students and their peers.

The Ponteland Partnership is one of only 4 partnerships of 14 within the county that does not currently operate any specialist provision in any of its educational settings and therefore this proposal would increase the diversity of provision in the area.

## **Equal Opportunities issues**

27. An updated Equalities Impact Assessment is attached to this report at Appendix 4.

Cabinet should note that in formulating its decision with regard to these proposals, it must comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), which requires them to have due regard to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not share it; and
- Foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

## **Community Cohesion**

28. Should the proposals be approved for the relocation of Atkinson House Special School to Ponteland, this could open opportunities for other schools in the local area to teach their pupils about young people from different backgrounds and communities within Northumberland which would be to their benefit as members of society.

Furthermore, it is the intention of the Governing Body of Atkinson House Special School to change its name to better reflect their school community and the needs of the pupils.

## **Transport, Travel and accessibility**

29. If the relocation of the school is approved, all current students attending would receive Home to School Transport and would be transported directly onto the school site. This is currently achieved through taxis which carry one or more pupils, save for two students, one of whom lives a few yards from school and the other who is dropped at school by a parent en route to work.

Based on the current cohort of students on roll at the school, the initial cost of home to school transport to Ponteland would increase by just over £122k p.a. the additional costs will be met through the £1m growth in the SEN transport budget for 2022/23. However, the majority of these students are based in the South East of the county and it is expected that over time they would be resident more in the central and west areas of the county and transport costs would consequentially reduce. Given the needs of this group of young people, it is not reasonable to expect that they could travel to school other than on Home to School Transport and therefore it is suggested that any impact on sustainable travel is not relevant to this proposal.

As stated in the Report of the Executive Director of Adult Social Care and Children's Services Report 11 January 2022, if the proposal to relocate Atkinson House Special School is not approved there is a potential that given that other special schools in the county are at or near capacity, out of county places would need to be commissioned for students with SEMH for September 2022. Currently the average cost of an out of county placement including transport costs is £10,000 more per annum than the cost of a place with transport in a Northumberland specialist provision.

### **Implications for students of Atkinson House Special School and timeline**

30. If approved to relocate, the school would open in its new building in Ponteland in September 2022. Following the decision, staff would begin a transition period working closely with the students and their families to prepare them for the relocation, including organised visits to the new site.

To aid in the transition, the Governing Body have intimated that they would like to change the name of the school that would reflect the designation of co-educational.

### **Implications for staff of Atkinson House Special School**

31. Should Cabinet approve Atkinson House Special School to change its designation to co-educational, there may be a need to employ additional staff to meet the needs of the additional student numbers and its re-designation as co-educational.

### **Buildings**

#### **32. Safeguarding measures**

Following the feedback from public consultation responses during the informal consultation and the engagement with the Pele Trust which highlighted their safeguarding concerns regarding the security of the school site and the interaction between Atkinson House and Richard Coates Primary School pupils and their neighbouring properties, a number of meetings of relevant NCC officers with representatives of the Pele Trust took place during the statutory period as agreed.

The proposed mitigations resulting from those meetings are now able to be set out below. These include the robust designs and safeguarding measures that have been developed by experienced architects and landscape architects to ensure that the former Richard Coates site remains secure and that the concerns raised regarding the interaction between the neighbouring schools/residential properties are appropriately addressed, should the proposals be approved.

These safeguarding measures include:

- Access control to be installed to all external doors.
- Installation of anti-climb acoustic timber fence between Atkinson House School and Richard Coates Primary School play areas.
- Installation of an anti-climb acoustic timber fence between Atkinson House School play area and the neighbouring residential properties.
- Installation of an anti-climb weld mesh fence to taxi drop off/rear staff car park and to the south elevation to contain fire escapes (retaining the existing hedgerow).
- A secure taxi/minibus drop off area for pupils located to the rear of the school building, to allow pupils to enter and leave vehicles within the secure boundary before departing.
- Alteration to the fence line between Richard Coates Primary School and Atkinson House School, to provide a new MUGA for Richard Coates and creating a planted 'buffer zone' between the two schools with mature planting which will assist with acoustics.

- Introduction of a 'buffer zone' between the Atkinson House external play area and neighbouring properties, utilising existing mature trees and planting that sit outside of the school's secure boundary.

The front elevation and landscape of the former Richard Coates building would remain largely unchanged, being used as an entrance for staff, visitors and parents only. Atkinson House Special School students would enter the site at the top entrance of the school via school transport, after which the external gates would be locked. Internally, only the lower floor is planned to be used by Atkinson House Special School and it would be divided into educational zones, that meets the needs and age ranges of the pupils with the installation of access control between zones.

### 33. Building works and funding

During the formal consultation period work has been undertaken to determine the scope of works required for the relocation of Atkinson House Special School, this has included working with headteacher of Atkinson House to ensure the plans meet the curriculum needs of the students as well as working with Pele Trust representatives to ensure there safeguarding concerns were addressed.

The buildings themselves are in relatively good condition having been an operational school only 12 months prior, although there has been some recent vandalism of the building. The site and buildings also allow for all the needs of the current pupils to be met as well as the opportunity to expand the provision for additional pupils. The school was originally built for nearly 500 pupils and the roll of Atkinson is currently 71 pupils with the potential for this to increase to 100 places over time. The additional capacity will also allow the local authority to look at the potential to collocate other services that support the special educational needs of the pupils attending Atkinson House.

Following more detailed work during the statutory consultation period It is estimated that the capital works required to undertake the relocation will be in the region of c.£5.5m. The budget will be met through the use of existing internal and external grant funding streams and are shown in detail below.

<b>Description of works</b>	<b>costs</b>
Refurbishment of internal ground floor accommodation of the former Richard Coates school, together with external works to provide dedicated play areas, redesigned secure parking and drop off pick area and new fencing to site to provide segregation to safeguard pupils.	£5.5m
<i>Total Cost</i>	<i>£5.5m</i>
<b>Funding Source</b>	<b>Contribution</b>
Council Medium Term Financial Plan (SEN capacity growth)	£2.5m
Basic Need Grant	£2.5m
Schools Capital Investment programme	£0.5m
<i>Total</i>	<i>£5.5m</i>

It is worth noting that the ex-Richard Coates buildings form part of a Church Supplemental Agreement with Coates Foundation. Separately, the playing fields for the ex-Richard Coates Site (which are owned by the Local Authority) are currently

under a lease to the Pele Trust. The buildings are in the process of being transferred back to the Local Authority following Richard Coates CofE Primary School's move into the adjacent school buildings previously occupied by Ponteland Primary School – a move which has physically taken place but for which the necessary legal agreements remain outstanding. Key to those agreements is the land swap of the freehold interest in the ex-Richard Coates buildings (still owned by the Coates Foundation) with the freehold interest in Ponteland Primary School (owned by the local authority). This land transfer (and associated termination of the Church Supplemental Agreement) can only take place once the Coates Foundation receive the necessary land valuations of each of the sites, and the DfE approval of the land swap has been obtained. In the meantime, it is proposed that the local authority enter into a licence agreement for the ex-Richard Coates buildings in order that construction works can start prior to the formal land swap taking place. DfE and the Local Authority are targeting the end of the spring term for completion of the land swap.

### **Implementation Plan**

34. Should the proposals be approved, Atkinson House School is proposed to relocate to the former Richard Coates site, increase its planned pupil numbers from 80 to 100 and become co-educational with effect from 1 September 2022.

### **Sport and Recreation**

35. It is important for the physical and mental wellbeing of students at Atkinson House Special School that they are able to have access to appropriate sporting facilities.

During the meetings between NCC officers and Pele Trust representatives referenced in para. 32, it was agreed that should the proposals be approved for implementation, the playing field areas used by Atkinson House Special School and Richard Coates CE Primary would be completely segregated so there would be no interaction between pupils in line with the wishes of Pele Trust. To enable the proposed separation of the external recreation areas, Atkinson House Special School would be allocated the existing MUGA pitch at the site, and a new MUGA would be constructed for Richard Coates CE Primary funded by the Council.

## **IMPLICATIONS ARISING OUT OF THE REPORT**

<b>Policy:</b>	These proposals are consistent with the Council's corporate priority that all residents should achieve and realise their potential
<b>Finance and value for money</b>	<p>Following the design and feasibility works approved by Cabinet at their meeting on 11 January 2022, a budget of £5.5m would be required to undertake the refurbishment works to the Richard Coates buildings and site. The cost of the project will be funded from a contribution of £2.5m from £6,693,625 gross capital allocation for 2022/23 to support Special Educational Needs. A further £2.5m from the Basic need grant from a balance of £7.2m and the remaining £0.5m from the School Capital Improvement Programme (SCIP). No additional funding is required for the capital works.</p> <p>It is expected that transport costs would be likely to increase by around £122k with the cost being funded from the £1m growth in SEN transport budget 2022/23. Due to the relocation and the additional pupils accessing provision at the new site. However, some costs would be offset by some pupils not having to undertake as long journeys to school as currently, while different arrangements for more effective transport of pupils to the new site would be explored should Cabinet approve implementation.</p>
<b>Legal</b>	DfE statutory guidance for proposers and decision-makers "Making significant changes ('prescribed alternations') to maintained schools, attached at Appendix 2, has been adhered to as part of this informal consultation process.
<b>Procurement</b>	Technical advisers and the appointment of a contractor to carry out the refurbishment works has been approved through the use of the NEEPO framework through direct award, due to the timescales required to deliver the project for the start of the academic year September 2022. The service of both teams have been used to develop the budget costs contained within this report.
<b>Human Resources:</b>	Should approval be given for Atkinson House to increase its planned pupil numbers and change its designation to co-educational, there may be a need to employ additional staff to meet the needs of the expanded service and the girls who attend. Staff will also be expected to relocate which will result in some staff having longer journeys to work, but some will also have shorter journey's to work.

<b>Property</b>	The former Richard Coates site is in the process of being transferred to NCC as set out in para of the report.
<b>Equalities</b> (Impact Assessment attached) Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	An Equalities Impact Assessment has been updated in the light of statutory consultation and is attached at Appendix 4.
<b>Risk Assessment</b>	An initial Risk Assessment and risk register has been carried on the construction works in order to develop the budget and programme for the project.
<b>Crime &amp; Disorder</b>	This report has considered Section 1 (CDA) and the duty it imposes and there are no implications arising from it
<b>Customer Considerations:</b>	The proposal set out in this report is based upon a desire to improve outcomes for a vulnerable group of children and young people and their families in Northumberland.
<b>Carbon Reduction</b>	It is not envisaged that the processes set out within this report will have any impact, positive or negative, on carbon reduction.
<b>Consultation</b>	This report has been considered by the Executive Director for Adults Social Care and Children's Services and the Member for Children's Services
<b>Wards</b>	Seghill with Seaton Delaval  Ponteland North

### Background Papers

Report of the Executive Director of Adult and Children's Services, Proposals for Atkinson House School, 13 October 2021

Report of the Executive Director of Adult and Children's Services, Outcomes of consultation on proposals for Atkinson House School, 11 January 2022

### Report Sign Off

Interim Executive Director of Finance & S151 Officer	Jan Willis
Monitoring Officer/Legal	Suki Binjal
Chief Executive	Daljit Lally
Executive Director of Adult Social Care and Children's Services	Cath McEvoy-Carr
Portfolio Holder	Guy Renner-Thompson



## Data Protection Implications

In carrying out the consultation set out in this report, the Council has acted in compliance with Data Protection Act 2018 via the Council's Data Protection Policy

Specifically,

- Data gathered during this consultation process has been dealt with fairly - e.g., the responses from members of the public have been anonymised, whilst those responding within a public role have been identified e.g., Chairs of Governors, Dioceses and so on.
- The data and information gathered during consultation has been used to assist in informing the recommendations set out in this report and will not be used for any other purpose, i.e., it will not be shared with another service area or any third party.
- The data and information gathered has been limited to that which would assist in informing the recommendations set out that will arise from this consultation.

The Council has set out how it deals with information received as part of consultation in the Council's Privacy Notice, at

<http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/About/Contact/Information.aspx#privacynotices> .

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## **Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Statutory Proposal, published 13 January 2022

Appendix 2 - DfE Making Significant changes ('prescribed alterations') to maintained schools, statutory guidance for proposers and decision-makers, October 2018

Appendix 3 – Representations received from interested parties during the statutory period 13 January to 10 February 2022 -

[LINK TO RESPONSES](#) [ZOOM TO READ](#)

Appendix 4 – Equalities Impact Assessment (updated)

**NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL**

**NOTIFICATION OF STATUTORY PROPOSALS FOR ATKINSON HOUSE SCHOOL**

Notice is hereby given in accordance with Section 19(1) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 that Northumberland County Council, County Hall, Morpeth, Northumberland NE61 2EF intends to make the following prescribed alterations to the following school:

**Atkinson House School  
Pitt Lane  
Front Street  
Seghill  
Northumberland  
NE23 7EB**

Atkinson House School is a Community Special School for boys aged 11 to 16.

**CHANGE IN NUMBER OF PUPILS IN A SPECIAL SCHOOL**

- The current number of planned pupil places at Atkinson House School is 80. The proposed number of planned pupil places is 100 to take effect from 1 September 2022.

**CHANGE FROM SINGLE SEX SCHOOL TO CO-EDUCATIONAL**

- Atkinson House School currently has provision for boys aged 11 to 16. It is proposed that the school becomes co-educational i.e., admits boys and girls aged 11 to 16, the change to take effect from 1 September 2022.

**TRANSFER TO A NEW SITE**

In order to facilitate the above proposals, notice is hereby given in accordance with Section 19(1) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 that Northumberland County Council County Hall, Morpeth, Northumberland NE61 2EF intends to transfer the site of Atkinson House School from its current site at Seghill, Northumberland to a new site at the following location, the transfer to take effect from 1 September 2022:

**The former Richard Coates CE Primary building  
Thornhill Road  
Ponteland  
Newcastle upon Tyne  
NE20 9QB**

**Copies of the full Statutory Proposal may be obtained from:**

The School Organisation and Resources Team  
Education and Skills  
Wellbeing and Community Health Services  
Northumberland County Council  
County Hall  
Morpeth  
Northumberland  
NE61 2EF

or from the Council's website at

<https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/Education/Schools/Consultations.aspx#schoolconsultations>

## Implementation.

- Atkinson House School is proposed to transfer site, increase its planned pupil numbers and become co-educational with effect from 1 September 2022.

## Objectives

The objectives of this proposal are to:

- **Change the number of planned pupils at Atkinson House School** - The current planned pupil number is 80 and the proposed planned pupil number is 100. The proposed increase in the planned pupil number is to take effect from 1 September 2022.
- **Change Atkinson House School from a single sex school for boys aged 11 to 16 to a co-educational school for boys and girls aged 11 to 16.** The proposed change in from single sex to co-educational is proposed to take effect from 1 September 2022.
- **Transfer the site of Atkinson House School** - the current site of Atkinson House School is located at Pitt Lane, Front Street, Seghill, Northumberland, NE23 7EB and the proposed site of Atkinson House School is the former Richard Coates CE Primary building, Thornhill Road, Ponteland, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE20 9QB to take effect from 1 September 2022.

## Reasons for proposal (evidence of demand):

The rationale for the proposal is centred on the premise that the number of children and young people who have been diagnosed as having Autism, Social Emotional and Mental Health needs in Northumberland has been increasing year on year for the past 10 years. This demand for special school places equates to an average increase over this period to date of 7% each year (actual variation from year to year has been between 2% and 12%). There continues to be an increasing demand from parents for their children to be educated within special school provision both in and out of the county.

Northumberland County Council has been successful in bidding for a special free school in Blyth (Gilbert Ward Academy) through the DfE's free school programme for secondary age young people who have autism and social, emotional and mental health needs (SEMH), but this will not be completed until early 2023. Other special schools in the county have increased their provision recently and the next available school to expand to meet demand would be Atkinson House School. There is also a growing demand for SEMH provision for girls in Northumberland from Year 7 onwards, with no specific provision for them currently in the county.

Given the delay in the opening of the Gilbert Ward Academy and the increasing demand for additional SEMH places across the county, it is proposed that relocating Atkinson House to the vacant former Richard Coates CE Primary School building in Ponteland would provide additional capacity on an ongoing basis, rather than a temporary solution. The additional capacity at the proposed site for Atkinson House School would also enable the school to expand its provision by moving from a single sex provision to co-educational, thus supporting the growing demand from girls diagnosed with SEMH.

Furthermore, as additional young people with SEMH needs would be able to be educated within Northumberland, it is expected that one of the main benefits of this proposal would be the ability to educate a vulnerable group of young people within or closer to their home communities in appropriate provision.

## Effect on other schools, academies and educational institutions in the area

There would be no educational impact or impact on numbers attending on any of the schools in the Ponteland Schools Partnership as a result of the proposal as none currently have any specialist provision. Atkinson House School has provision for boys with an EHCP specifically for SEMH needs and would expand its provision only to meet the needs of girls with an EHCP specifically for SEMH needs. All students attending Atkinson House School even after it relocates would have an EHCP and would be eligible for free home to school transport.

A number of concerns were raised during the pre-publication (informal) consultation from the Pele Trust (specifically in relation to perceived potential impact on Richard Coates CE Primary) and Little Tinklers Nursery, both of which settings are adjacent to the former Richard Coates building on Thornhill Road, Ponteland. These concerns related on the whole to safeguarding concerns around the potential for younger children to come into contact with or overhear inappropriate language from secondary age students at Atkinson House School.

The Council is mindful of the concerns of the above settings, and also of the desire for Atkinson House School to ensure the safeguarding of its own vulnerable students. Therefore, should this statutory proposal be approved for implementation, Council officers would support the involvement of representatives from all the 3 settings adjacent to one another at Thornhill Road to work collaboratively in developing appropriate safeguarding arrangements for all children and young people attending the settings and for ongoing collaboration and information sharing in order to provide continuing assurance to parents, staff and pupils attending their schools and nursery.

### **Project Costs and Proposed Implementation**

Should this Statutory Proposal be approved for implementation, there would be a need to carry out building works to facilitate changes that would be required for students with SEMH needs. Draft building costs for such capital works at the former Richard Coates site are estimated to be in the region of c.£2.5m. Feasibility and design works approved to take place will provide confirmation of the building costs and these will be presented to the Council's Cabinet when they make a final decision on this proposal in March 2022.

The cost of the project would be funded from the circa £6.7 gross capital allocation for 2022/23 to support Special Educational Needs. As additional young people with SEMH needs would be able to be educated within Northumberland, it is expected that one of the main benefits of this proposal would be the ability to educate a vulnerable group of young people within or closer to their home communities in appropriate provision. However, it is envisaged that savings to the Council's special educational needs funding streams would also be made in the medium to long-term from reductions in the need for out of county placements and associated transport costs, which at the moment are estimated to cost £10,000 per place per annum more than an in-county place.

If approved, the prescribed alterations outlined in this Statutory Proposal would be implemented in one stage with effect from 1 September 2022. Staff of Atkinson House would begin preparing the current students on roll at the school for the relocation over the months leading up to the relocation of the school should the proposal be approved.

### **Pupil Numbers and Admissions**

#### **Atkinson House School**

Atkinson House School currently has provision for 80 students and there were 74 on roll as at Autumn 2021. Additional places are required at the school to manage the intake of students entering Year 7 in September 2022 in Northumberland who have SEMH needs.

The age range of the school is 11-16 and currently provides single-sex education to boys only.

All students on roll at Atkinson House School have an Education and Health Care Plan.

### **Impact on the Community**

There were some concerns raised by consultees during the pre-publication (informal) consultation period around the impact of the relocation of Atkinson House School to the former Richard Coates site on the local community, including safeguarding with 3 education settings adjacent to one another, increase in traffic and congestion, anti-social behaviour and the actual need for additional provision for young people with SEMH needs.

Safeguarding and the need for additional provision for students with SEMH needs in Northumberland has been addressed earlier in this notice. With regard to impact on traffic congestion, all current students on roll at Atkinson House School are eligible for home to school transport and would be transported onto and off the school site in organised taxis. Furthermore, the Headteacher of Atkinson House School has already agreed that if the proposal is approved, he would instruct the taxi firms to transport students to enter and leave with students at the top entrance to the site which is not shared with either Richard Coates CE Primary or with Little Tinklers Nursery via the north end of Thornhill Road, thus avoiding the parental traffic arising from the latter settings. This arrangement would ensure that there would be little or no impact on traffic congestion as a result of the relocation of Atkinson House School and would also assist with ameliorating the safeguarding concerns of some consultees.

Given the home to school transport arrangements that would be in place for students attending Atkinson House School, any contact with the local community would be very limited compared to that of students attending other schools in the Ponteland area.

### **Travel and Transport**

All students on roll at Atkinson House are eligible for Home to School Transport and this would continue to be the case should this proposal be approved for implementation and the school relocate to the proposed site of the former Richard Coates building.

There would be some additional home to school transport vehicles (in the form of taxis) as a result of this proposal due to the proposed increase to planned pupil numbers. However, this is not anticipated to represent a significant increase in car use.

### **Consultation**

Although there is no statutory requirement to carry out a pre-publication (informal) consultation on the proposals set out within this statutory proposal, nonetheless a six week period of informal consultation (all during school term-time) was carried out by the Council from 13 October to and 1 December 2021 inclusive which was in line with the latest DfE Guidelines as set out in *'Making Significant Changes ('prescribed alterations') to maintained schools – statutory guidance for proposers and decision-makers October 2018'*.

#### Process

A consultation document, including a questionnaire, was drawn up which set out the rationale, background information and implications of the proposal. This document was circulated directly to 2,016 interested parties as set out in a Consultation Register. The document was also published on the Council's website, on Twitter and Facebook and a notice highlighting the consultation displayed in the local library at Ponteland and was therefore available generally to the wider public. In addition, an online 'padlet' was set up, which held supporting information including the consultation document and frequently asked questions arising from consultees during the actual consultation period and therefore was a useful substitute for a public facing event.

In the interests of safety for staff and the wider public, meetings during the consultation period with the following interested parties were held virtually:

Ponteland Town Council  
Atkinson House Governing Body  
Atkinson House Staff  
Little Tinklers Nursery Manager

Operational meetings were also held with members of the Pele Trust, including members of the Richard Coates CE Primary school local Governing Body.

#### Outcomes

Notes of the virtual consultation meetings, and all views and responses received during the consultation period are summarised in the Executive Director of Adult Social Care and Children's Services Report to Cabinet – Outcomes of consultation on proposals for Atkinson House Special School, 11 January 2022 available on the Northumberland County Council website at

<https://northumberland.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=140&MId=1400>

### **Submission of Objections and Comments on Proposals**

Within four weeks after the date of publication of the above proposals (**i.e. by midnight on Thursday 10 February 2022**), any person may submit comments, including support or objections to the proposals by sending their written representations to: **The Executive Director of Adult Social Care and Children's Services, County Hall, Morpeth, Northumberland NE61 2EF**, or by email to [educationconsultation@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:educationconsultation@northumberland.gov.uk)

Signature

Publication Date: 13 January 2022

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Cath McEvoy-Carr', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Cath McEvoy-Carr  
Executive Director of Adult Social Care and Children's Services  
Northumberland County Council

**DfE – Making Significant Changes (‘prescribed alterations’) to maintained schools. statutory  
g for proposers and decision-makers**





Department  
for Education

# **Making significant changes (‘prescribed alterations’) to maintained schools**

**Statutory guidance for proposers and  
decision-makers**

**October 2018**

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# 1: Summary

## About this guidance

This is statutory guidance from the Department for Education. This means that recipients must have regard to it when making 'prescribed alterations' to maintained schools.

The purpose of this guidance is to ensure that good quality school places can be provided quickly where they are needed; that local authorities (LAs) and governing bodies (GBs) do not take decisions that will have a negative impact on other schools in the area; and that changes can be implemented quickly and effectively where there is a strong case for doing so. In line with these aims it is expected that, where possible, additional new places will only be provided at schools that have an overall Ofsted rating of 'good' or 'outstanding'. Schools which do not fall within the above categories should only be expanded where there are no other viable options.

A GB, LA or the [Schools Adjudicator](#) must have regard to this guidance when exercising functions under [The School Organisation \(Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools\) \(England\) Regulations 2013](#) ('the Prescribed Alterations Regulations'). It should be read in conjunction with Parts 2 and 3 and Schedule 3 of the [Education and Inspections Act \(EIA\) 2006](#) and the Prescribed Alterations Regulations. It also relates to the [Establishment and Discontinuance Regulations](#) and [The School Organisation \(Removal of Foundation, Reduction in the Number of Foundation Governors and Ability of Foundation to Pay Debts\) \(England\) Regulations \(2007\)](#) ('the Removal Regulations').

It is the responsibility of LAs and GBs to ensure that they act in accordance with the relevant legislation when making changes to a maintained school and they are advised to seek independent legal advice where appropriate.

## Review date

This guidance will be reviewed in October 2019.

## Who is this guidance for?

Those proposing to make changes and making decisions on changes to maintained schools (e.g. GBs, LAs and the Schools Adjudicator), and for information purposes for those affected by a proposal (trustees of the school, diocese or relevant diocesan board, any other relevant faith body, parents etc.).

This guidance is relevant to all categories of maintained schools (as defined in section 20 of the [School Standards and Framework Act \(SSFA\) 1998](#)), unless explicitly stated. It is not relevant to [Pupil Referral Units](#). Separate advice [on making significant changes to an academy](#) and [opening and closing a maintained school](#) is available.

Please refer to the '[Further Information](#)' section for the full website address should you be unable to access documents via the hyperlinks provided.

## Terminology

Definitions of common terms used in this guidance:

**Schools with a religious character** - All schools designated as having a religious character in accordance with the [SSFA](#).

**Foundation Trust** - For the purpose of this guidance the term 'foundation trust' refers to a foundation complying with the requirements set out in section 23A of the SSFA.

**Parent(s)** - The Education Act 1996 defines 'parent' as including someone who has care of, or legal responsibility for, the child. Therefore, a parent can include, for example, a grandparent, other family member or foster carer if they have care of or responsibility for the child.

## Main points

- All proposals for prescribed alterations must follow the processes set out in this guidance.
- Where a LA proposes to expand a school that is eligible for intervention as set out in Section 59 of the [Education and Inspections Act 2006](#), they should copy the proposal to the relevant [Regional Schools Commissioner \(RSC\)](#) at the point of publication.
- To enable the department to monitor potentially contentious proposals, the proposer should copy any proposal, which falls within the definitions set out in [part 3](#), to the School Organisation mailbox as soon as it is published [schoolorganisation.notifications@education.gov.uk](mailto:schoolorganisation.notifications@education.gov.uk).
- LAs and GBs proposing to make a significant change to a school which has been designated as having a religious character should engage the trustees of the school, and in the case of Church schools the diocese or relevant

diocesan board, or any other relevant faith body, where appropriate at the earliest opportunity.

- Where a LA is the decision maker, it must make a decision within a period of two months of the end of the representation period. Where a decision is not made within this time frame, the LA must refer the proposal to the Schools Adjudicator for a decision.
- It is not possible for any school to gain, lose or change religious character through a change of category. Information on the process to be followed is available in the [opening and closing maintained schools guidance](#).
- Once a decision has been made the proposer (GB or LA) must make the necessary changes to the school's record in the department's system [Get Information About Schools](#) (GIAS) by the date the change is implemented.
- Where a school wishes to change their name, the GB will need to amend the Instrument of Government in line with regulation 30 of [The School Governance \(Constitution\) \(England\) Regulations 2012](#). Once that is done, either the school or the LA will need to update the school record in the department's GIAS system.



## 2: Prescribed alteration changes

### Enlargement of premises (expansion)

Under section 14 of the [Education Act 1996](#), LAs have a statutory duty to ensure that there are sufficient schools for primary and secondary education in their areas. The department expects LAs to manage the school estate efficiently and to reduce or find alternative uses for surplus capacity (for example, increasing the provision of early education and childcare) to avoid detriment to schools' educational offer or financial position. LAs are encouraged to consider the use of modular construction solutions for any physical building expansion and to consider all options for the reutilisation of space including via remodelling, amalgamations, or closure where this would be the best course of action.

Where additional places are needed, including where there is a local demand for a particular category of places (for example in schools designated as having a religious character), the LA can propose an enlargement of the capacity<sup>1</sup> of premises.

The statutory process should be followed to enlarge premises as set out in the [Prescribed Alterations Regulations](#) (see [part 5](#)) if:

- the proposed enlargement is permanent (longer than three years) and **would increase the capacity of the school** by:
  - more than 30 pupils; **and**
  - 25% or 200 pupils (whichever is the lesser).
- the proposal involves making permanent any temporary enlargement (which was intended to be in place for no more than three years) that meets the above threshold.

GBs of all categories of mainstream schools and LAs can propose small scale expansions that do not meet the thresholds above without the need to follow the formal statutory process in [part 4](#). In many cases this can be achieved solely by increasing the school's published admissions number<sup>2</sup> (PAN); please see the [School Admissions Code](#). The thresholds do not, however, apply to special schools. Details of how special schools can increase their intake<sup>3</sup> are covered below.

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<sup>1</sup> Net capacity as calculated using the DfE Guidance Assessing the Net Capacity of Schools (2002).

<sup>2</sup> All admission authorities must set a published admission number (PAN) for each 'relevant age group' when they determine their admission arrangements. So, if a school has an admissions number of 120 pupils for Year 7, that is its PAN.

<sup>3</sup> The number of pupils admitted into the school at a particular time

## Examples of when mainstream schools would/would not need to publish 'enlargement' proposals

A secondary school with a capacity of 750 (5 form of entry - 30 pupils per class, 5 year groups) **could** enlarge its premises to add 1 form of entry (30 extra pupils x 5 year groups = increase of 150 pupils) bringing the capacity to 900 pupils, **without** having to publish statutory proposals. Although the increase would be by 'more than 30' pupils, it is less than '200', and also less than '25%' of the current capacity (i.e. by less than 187).

A small primary school with a capacity of 50 **could** enlarge its premises to increase its capacity by up to 29 pupils **without** having to publish statutory proposals, because although it would be more than '25%', it is less than 30.

A school of any size enlarging its premises to enable it to add 300 places **would** need to follow the statutory process as the increase would be **both** 'more than 30' **and** '200' (it may or may not be more than '25%' but that is irrelevant if the 200 threshold would be met).

A primary school with a capacity of 210 enlarging its premises to enable it to add 105 places (1.5 forms of entry  $45 \times 7 = 315$ ), **would** need to follow the statutory process as the increase would be 'more than 30' and **more than** '25%' (it would be less than 200 but this is irrelevant as the 25% threshold would be met).

## The quality of new places created through expansion

We expect LAs to consider a range of performance indicators and financial data, before deciding whether a school should be expanded. Where schools are underperforming, we would not expect them to expand, unless there is a strong case that this would help to raise standards. We expect LAs to create new places in schools that have an overall Ofsted rating of 'good' or 'outstanding'. If, however, there are no other feasible ways to create new places in the area, the LA should notify their Pupil Places Planning adviser<sup>4</sup>. In cases where there is a proposal to expand a school that is rated inadequate, the LA should also send a copy of the proposal to the [relevant RSC](#) so that they can ensure appropriate intervention strategies are in place.

The table below sets out who can propose an enlargement of premises and what process must be followed:

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<sup>4</sup> [Advisers.PPP@education.gov.uk](mailto:Advisers.PPP@education.gov.uk)



Proposer	Type of proposal	Process	Decision-maker	Right of appeal to the adjudicator
LA for community	Enlargement of premises that meets the threshold	Statutory process	LA	CofE Diocese RC Diocese
LA for voluntary or foundation	Enlargement of premises that meets the threshold	Statutory process	LA	CofE Diocese RC Diocese GB/Trustees
LA for voluntary and foundation	Enlargement of premises (below the threshold)	Non statutory process	LA	N/A
GB of all categories mainstream	Enlargement of premises (below the threshold)	Non statutory process	GB	N/A

## Expansion onto an additional site (or 'satellite sites')

Where proposers seek to expand onto an additional site they will need to ensure that the new provision is genuinely a change to an existing school and not in reality the establishment of a new school. Where a LA decides that a new school is needed to meet basic need, they should refer to the [guidance for opening new schools](#).

Decisions about whether a proposal represents a genuine expansion will need to be taken on a case-by-case basis, but proposers and decision makers will need to consider this non-exhaustive list of factors which are intended to expose the extent to which the new site is integrated with the existing site, and the extent to which it will serve the same community as the existing site:

### The reasons for the expansion

- What is the rationale for this approach and this particular site?

### Admission and curriculum arrangements

- How will the new site be used (e.g. which age groups/pupils will it serve)?
- What will the admission arrangements be?
- Will there be movement of pupils between sites?

## **Governance and administration**

- How will whole school activities be managed?
- Will staff be employed on contracts to work on both sites? How frequently will they do so?
- What governance, leadership and management arrangements will be put in place to oversee the new site (e.g. will the new site be governed by the same GB and the same school leadership team)?

## **Physical characteristics of the school**

- How will facilities across the two sites be used (e.g. sharing of the facilities and resources available at the two sites, such as playing fields)?
- Is the new site in an area that is easily accessible to the community that the current school serves?

The purpose of considering these factors is to determine the level of integration between the two sites; the more integration, the more likely the change will be considered as an expansion.

LAs should copy any proposal to expand a school onto a satellite site to [schoolorganisation.notifications@education.gov.uk](mailto:schoolorganisation.notifications@education.gov.uk) for monitoring purposes.

## **Expansion of existing grammar schools**

Legislation prohibits the establishment of new grammar schools<sup>5</sup>. Expansion of any existing grammar school onto a satellite site can only happen if the new site is genuinely part of the existing school. Decision-makers must consider the factors listed above when deciding if an expansion is a legitimate enlargement of an existing school.

## **Changes to the published admissions number (PAN) where an enlargement of premises has not taken place**

Admission authorities<sup>6</sup> must set a PAN for each 'relevant age group' when determining their admission arrangements. If an admission authority of a mainstream school wishes to increase or decrease PAN, without increasing the overall physical

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<sup>5</sup> Except where a grammar school is replacing one of more existing grammar schools

<sup>6</sup> The LA in the case of community and voluntary controlled (VC) schools or the GB in the case of voluntary aided (VA) and foundation schools

capacity of the buildings, this would be classed as an admissions change, not a prescribed alteration. The statutory process described in this guidance would not need to be followed (please see the [School Admissions Code](#) for further details of the processes admission authorities must follow).

## Change in number of pupils in a special school

The School Admissions Code does not apply to special schools. GBs of all categories of special school, and LAs for community special schools, may seek to increase the number of places by following the statutory process in [part 5](#), if the increase is by:

- 10%; or
- 20 pupils (or 5 pupils if the school is a boarding-only school),

(whichever is the smaller number).

The exception to this is where a special school is established in a hospital.

GBs of all categories of special school, and LAs for community special schools, may seek to decrease the number of pupils, by following the statutory process in [part 5](#).

The table below sets out who can propose a change in the number of pupils in a special school and what process must be followed:

Proposer	Type of proposal	Process	Decision-maker	Right of appeal to the adjudicator
GB foundation special	Increase by 10% or 20 pupils (5 for boarding special) or decrease numbers	Statutory process	LA	CofE Diocese RC Diocese GB/Trustees
GB community special	Increase by 10% or 20 pupils (5 for boarding special) or decrease numbers	Statutory process	LA	CofE Diocese RC Diocese
LA for community special and foundation special	Increase by 10% or 20 pupils (5 for boarding special)	Statutory process	LA	CofE Diocese RC Diocese

Proposer	Type of proposal	Process	Decision-maker	Right of appeal to the adjudicator
LA for foundation special	Increase by 10% or 20 pupils (5 for boarding special)	Statutory process	LA	GB/Trustees
LA for community special	Decrease of numbers	Statutory process	LA	CofE Diocese RC Diocese

## Change of age range

For changes that are expected to be in place for more than 2 years (as these are considered permanent increases):

**LAs** can propose:

- a change of age range of up to 2 years (except for adding or removing a sixth form) for voluntary and foundation schools by following the non-statutory process, see [part 4](#).
- a change of age range of 1 year or more for community schools (including the adding or removal of sixth form or nursery provision) and community special schools or alter the upper age limit of a foundation or voluntary school to add sixth form provision by following the statutory process, see [part 5](#).

**GBs** of foundation and voluntary schools can propose:

- an age range change of up to 2 years (except for adding or removing a sixth form) by following the non-statutory process, see [part 4](#).
- an age range change of 3 years or more (including adding or removing a sixth form) by following the statutory process, see [part 5](#).

Before making such a proposal, the GB should consult with LAs, and where the school is designated as having a religious character the trustees of the school, dioceses or relevant diocesan boards, or any other relevant faith body, to understand the place management needs of the area.

**GBs** of community schools can propose the alteration of their upper age limit to add sixth form provision following the statutory process, see [part 5](#).

**GBs** of community special and foundation special schools can propose a change of age range of 1 year or more following the statutory process, see [part 5](#).



Where a proposed age range change would also require an expansion of the school's premises, the LA or GB must also ensure that they act in accordance with the requirements for proposals for the [enlargement of premises](#).

In cases where the age-range of the school has changed, this should be altered on GIAS. For example if the age-range is changed so that the school no longer caters for pupils below compulsory school age, the lower age range of the school would need to be increased so as not to include that age group.

The table below sets out who can propose a change of age range and what process must be followed:

Proposer	Type of proposal	Process	Decision-maker	Right of appeal to the adjudicator
LA for voluntary and foundation	Alteration of upper or lower age range of up to 2 years (excluding adding or removing a sixth form)	Non statutory process	LA	NA
GB of voluntary and foundation	Alteration of upper or lower age range by up to 2 years (excluding adding or removing a sixth form)	Non statutory process	GB	N/A
GB of voluntary and foundation	Alteration of upper or lower age range by 3 years or more	Statutory process	LA	CofE Diocese RC Diocese GB/Trustees
LA for community and community special	Alteration of upper or lower age range by 1 year or more (for community schools including the adding or removal of sixth form or nurse provision)	Statutory process	LA	CofE Diocese RC Diocese
GB foundation special	Alteration of upper or lower age range by one year or more	Statutory process	LA	CofE Diocese RC Diocese GB/Trustees
GB community special	Alteration of upper or lower age range by one year or more	Statutory process	LA	CofE Diocese RC Diocese
LA for community	Alteration of upper age range so as to add or	Statutory process	LA	CofE Diocese RC Diocese

Proposer	Type of proposal	Process	Decision-maker	Right of appeal to the adjudicator
	remove sixth form provision			
LA for voluntary and foundation	Alteration of upper age range so as to add sixth form provision	Statutory process	LA	CofE Diocese RC Diocese GB/Trustees
GB of voluntary and foundation	Alteration of upper age range so as to add sixth form provision	Statutory process	LA	CofE Diocese RC Diocese GB/Trustees
GB of community	Alteration of upper age range so as to add sixth form provision	Statutory process	LA	CofE Diocese RC Diocese
GB of voluntary and foundation	Alteration of upper age range so as to remove sixth form provision	Statutory process	LA	CofE Diocese RC Diocese GB/Trustees

## Adding a sixth form

The department wants to ensure that all temporary (which is anticipated will be in place for no more than 2 years) and permanent provision is of the highest quality and provides genuine value for money. There is a departmental expectation that proposals for the addition of sixth form provision will only be put forward for secondary schools that are rated as 'good' or 'outstanding' by Ofsted. Proposers should also consider the supply of other local post-16 provision in the area and assess if there is a genuine need for the additional provision.

In deciding whether new sixth form provision would be appropriate, proposers and decision makers should consider the following guidelines:

- **Quality:** The quality of pre-16 education must be good or outstanding (as rated by Ofsted) and the school must have a history of positive Progress 8 scores (above 0);
- **Size:** The proposed sixth form will provide at least 200 places and there should be sufficient demand for those places;
- **Subject Breadth:** The proposed sixth form should - either directly or through partnership - offer a minimum of 15 A level subjects. LAs may wish to consider the benefits of delivering a broader A level curriculum through

partnership arrangements with other school sixth forms. Working with others can offer opportunities to:

- Improve choice and attainment for pupils
- Deliver new, improved or more integrated services
- Make efficiency savings through sharing costs
- Develop a stronger, more united voice
- Share knowledge and information.

Schools proposing a partnership arrangement must include evidence of how this will operate on a day-to-day basis, including timetabling and the deployment of staff;

- **Demand:** There should be a clear demand for additional post-16 places in the local area (including evidence of a shortage of post-16 places and a consideration of the quality of Level 3 provision in the area). The proposed sixth form should not create excessive surplus places or have a detrimental effect on other high quality post-16 provision in the local area;
- **Financial viability:** The proposed sixth form should be financially viable (there must be evidence of financial resilience should student numbers fall). The average class size should be at least 15, unless there is a clear educational argument to run smaller classes – for example to build the initial credibility of courses with a view to increasing class size in future.

Not all changes in age range to add a sixth form will necessitate a change to the school's admissions arrangements, for example a school may set up sixth form provision solely for its own pupils. However, if the intention is to also admit external applicants to the sixth form the school will need to adopt a sixth form PAN and may also wish to add academic entry requirements on changing its age-range.

The addition of post-16 provision requires a change of age-range, therefore, where a decision-maker is considering a proposal to add post-16 provision, they should refer to the section on changing an age range.

## Closing an additional site

For foundation and voluntary schools that are already operating on a satellite site(s), GBs must follow the statutory process in [part 5](#) if they are proposing the closure of one or more sites, where the main entrance at any of the school's remaining sites is one mile or more from the main entrance of the site which is to be closed. The LA may make such a proposal for a community school following the statutory process in [part 5](#).



The table below sets out who can propose the closure of an additional site and what process must be followed:

Proposer	Type of proposal	Process	Decision-maker	Right of appeal to the adjudicator
LA for community	Closure of one or multiple sites	Statutory process	LA	CofE Diocese RC Diocese
GB voluntary or foundation	Closure of one or multiple sites	Statutory process	LA	CofE Diocese RC Diocese GB/Trustees

## Transfer to a new site

Where the main entrance of the proposed new site for a school would be more than two miles from the main entrance of the current school site, or if the proposed new site is within the area of another LA:

- **LAs** can propose the transfer to an entirely new site for community schools, community special schools and maintained nursery schools following the statutory process in [part 5](#).
- **GBs of voluntary, foundation, foundation special and community special** schools can also propose a transfer to a new site following the statutory process in [part 5](#).

The table below sets out who can propose a transfer to a new site and what process must be followed:

Proposer	Type of proposal	Process	Decision-maker	Right of appeal to the adjudicator
LA for community, community special and maintained nursery	Transfer to new site	Statutory process	LA	CofE Diocese RC Diocese
GB voluntary foundation or foundation special	Transfer to new site	Statutory process	LA	CofE Diocese RC Diocese GB/Trustees
GB community special	Transfer to new site	Statutory process	LA	CofE Diocese RC Diocese



## Changes of category

**GBs** of all categories of maintained schools, apart from GBs of foundation special schools, may propose to change category by following the statutory process. The [addition or removal of a foundation](#) is described in [part 6](#). Where GBs are proposing a change of category covering a change in provision (e.g. from mainstream to special school) they are encouraged to seek advice by emailing [schoolorganisation.notifications@education.gov.uk](mailto:schoolorganisation.notifications@education.gov.uk).

For a proposal to change the category of a school to voluntary-aided, the decision-maker should be satisfied that the GB and/or the foundation are able and willing to meet their financial responsibilities for building work. The decision-maker may wish to consider whether the GB has access to sufficient funds to enable it to meet 10% of its capital expenditure for at least five years from the date of implementation, taking into account anticipated building projects.

Guidance on adding or changing a designated religious character can be found in the [Opening and closing maintained schools](#) guidance.

The table below sets out who can propose a change of category and what process must be followed:

Proposer	Type of proposal	Process	Decision-maker	Right of appeal to the adjudicator
GB of voluntary	VC to VA VA to VC	Statutory process	LA	CofE Diocese RC Diocese GB/Trustees
GB of voluntary	VC or VA to foundation school VC or VA to foundation school and acquire a foundation VC or VA to foundation school, acquire a foundation and majority foundation governors on GB	Statutory process	GB	For proposals at a VA school when decided by the GB: LA CofE Diocese RC Diocese
GB of foundation	Foundation school to VC or VA	Statutory process	LA	CofE Diocese RC Diocese GB/Trustees

Proposer	Type of proposal	Process	Decision-maker	Right of appeal to the adjudicator
GB of foundation	Acquire foundation Acquire a majority of foundation governors on the GB Removal of foundation and/or reduction in majority of foundation governors on GB	Statutory process	GB	N/A
GB of community	Community to VC or VA	Statutory process	LA	CofE Diocese RC Diocese
GB of community	Community to foundation school Community to foundation school and acquire foundation Community to foundation school and acquire majority of foundation governors on GB	Statutory process	GB	N/A
GB of foundation special	Remove foundation and/or reduce majority of foundation governors on GB	Statutory process	GB	N/A

### Single sex school becoming co-educational (or vice versa)

Proposers can seek to change their school from single sex to co-educational (or vice versa) when they can show that this would better serve their local community. A co-educational school cannot change its nursery or post-16 provision to single sex.

When making a decision, LAs will need to consider the demand for and balance of school places for boys and girls in line with the [Equality Act 2010](#).

The table below sets out who can change a school from single sex to co-educational (or vice versa) and what process must be followed:

Proposer	Type of proposal	Process	Decision-maker	Right of appeal to the adjudicator
LA for community or community special	To co-ed or single sex provision	Statutory process	LA	CofE Diocese RC Diocese
GB of foundation. foundation special or voluntary	To co-ed or single sex provision	Statutory process	LA	CofE Diocese RC Diocese GB/Trustees
GB of community special	To co-ed or single sex provision	Statutory process	LA	CofE Diocese RC Diocese

### **Mainstream school: establish/remove/alter special educational needs (SEN) provision**

When considering any reorganisation of provision that the LA recognises as reserved for pupils with special educational needs, including that which might lead to children being displaced, proposers will need to demonstrate how the proposed alternative arrangements are likely to lead to improvements in the standard, quality and/or range of educational provision for those children.

The table below sets out who can propose to establish, remove or alter SEN provision and what process must be followed:

Proposer	Type of proposal	Process	Decision-maker	Right of appeal to the adjudicator
LA for community	Establish, remove or alter SEN provision	Statutory process	LA	CofE Diocese RC Diocese
LA for voluntary and foundation	Establish or remove SEN provision	Statutory process	LA	CofE Diocese RC Diocese GB/Trustees
GB of foundation	Establish, remove or alter SEN provision	Statutory process	LA	CofE Diocese RC Diocese GB/Trustees

Proposer	Type of proposal	Process	Decision-maker	Right of appeal to the adjudicator
and voluntary				

## Change the types of need catered for by a special school

The table below sets out who can propose a change to the type of need catered for by a special school and what process must be followed:

Proposer	Type of proposal	Process	Decision-maker	Right of appeal to the adjudicator
LA for community special	Change designation and categories of SEN provision	Statutory process	LA	CofE Diocese RC Diocese
LA for foundation special	Change designation and categories of SEN provision	Statutory process	LA	CofE Diocese RC Diocese GB/Trustees
GB of community special	Change designation and categories of SEN provision	Statutory process	LA	CofE Diocese RC Diocese
GB of foundation special	Change designation and categories of SEN provision	Statutory process	LA	CofE Diocese RC Diocese GB/Trustees

## Boarding provision

The introduction of boarding provision can require the statutory process to be followed (depending on the type of school in question – see table below). LAs and GBs will need to consider how the Prescribed Alterations Regulations apply in conjunction with this guidance and, where there is any doubt, seek independent legal advice, as the department cannot advise on individual cases.

**LAs** can propose for:

- community schools; the establishment, removal or alteration (decrease by 50 pupils or 50% whichever is the greater) of boarding provision by following the statutory process in [part 5](#).



- community special schools; the establishment, removal or alteration (increase or decrease by 5 places or more where there are both day and boarding places) of boarding provision following the statutory process in [part 5](#).

**GBs** of voluntary and foundation schools can propose the establishment or increase of boarding provision following the non-statutory process in [part 4](#) and the removal or alteration (decrease by 50 pupils or 50% whichever is the greater) of boarding provision by following the statutory process in [part 5](#).

**GBs** of special schools can add or remove boarding provision or, where the school makes provision for day and boarding pupils, can increase or decrease boarding provision by five pupils or more following the statutory process in [part 5](#).

The table below sets out who can propose to establish, change or remove boarding provision and what process must be followed:

Proposer	Type of proposal	Process	Decision-maker	Right of appeal to the adjudicator
LA for community	Add, remove or change (decrease by 50 pupils or 50% whichever is greater) boarding provision	Statutory process	LA	CofE Diocese RC Diocese
LA for community special	Add, remove or change (increase or decrease by 5 pupils or more) boarding provision	Statutory process	LA	CofE Diocese RC Diocese
GB of foundation or voluntary	Add boarding provision	Non-statutory process	GB	N/A
GB of foundation or voluntary	Remove or change (decrease by 50 pupils or 50% whichever is greater) boarding provision	Statutory process	LA	CofE Diocese RC Diocese GB/Trustees
GB of foundation special	Add, remove or change (increase or decrease by 5 pupils or more) boarding provision	Statutory process	LA	CofE Diocese RC Diocese GB/Trustees
GB of community special	Add, remove or change (increase or decrease by 5 pupils or more) boarding provision	Statutory process	LA	CofE Diocese RC Diocese

In making a decision on a proposal to remove boarding provision from a school, the decision-maker should consider whether there is a state funded boarding school within reasonable distance from the school and whether there are satisfactory alternative boarding arrangements for those currently in the school and those who may need boarding places in the foreseeable future, including the children of service families.

## Remove selective admission arrangements at a grammar school

The table below sets out who can propose the removal of selective admission arrangements<sup>7</sup> and what process must be followed:

Proposer	Type of proposal	Process	Decision-maker	Right of appeal to the adjudicator
GB of voluntary or foundation	Remove selective admission arrangements	Statutory process	LA	CofE Diocese RC Diocese GB/Trustees
GB of community	Remove selective admission arrangements	Statutory process	LA	CofE Diocese RC Diocese

## Amalgamations

The LA and/or GB (depending on school category) can publish a proposal to close one school (or more) and enlarge/change the age range/transfer site (following the statutory process as/when necessary) of an existing school, to accommodate the displaced pupils. The remaining school would retain its original school number, as it is not a new school, even if its phase has changed.

Alternatively, LAs may propose to close all the schools involved and replace them with a new school. For more information, please consult the separate guidance on [opening and closing a maintained school](#).

<sup>7</sup> In accordance with s.109 (1) of the School Standards and Frameworks Act 1998

### 3: Contentious proposals

When proposing changes, LA's and GBs should act reasonably, and in line with the principles of public law, to ensure that the changes do not have a negative impact on the education of pupils in the area.

To enable the department to monitor potentially controversial proposals, LAs and GBs should notify [schoolorganisation.notifications@education.gov.uk](mailto:schoolorganisation.notifications@education.gov.uk) of the publication of any proposals which would:

- involve [expansion onto a separate 'satellite' site](#); or
- where objections have been raised that the proposed change could potentially undermine the quality of education in the local area by creating additional places where there is surplus capacity.

## 4: Changes that can be made outside of the statutory process

LAs and GBs of mainstream maintained schools can make limited changes (see [part 2](#) for the exact detail) to their schools without following a statutory process, including some temporary changes; they are nevertheless required to adhere to the usual principles of public law. They MUST:

- act rationally;
- take into account all relevant and no irrelevant considerations; and
- follow a fair procedure.

The department expects that in making these changes, LAs and GBs will work together and will:

- liaise with the trustees of the school, and in the case of schools designated as having a religious character the diocese or relevant diocesan board, or any other relevant faith body, to ensure that a proposal is aligned with wider place planning/organisational arrangements, and that any necessary consents have been gained;
- not undermine the quality of education provided or the financial viability of other 'good' and 'outstanding' schools in the local area;
- not create additional places in a local planning area where there is already surplus capacity in schools, taking the quality and diversity of the provision into account as well as cross boundary impacts; and
- ensure open and fair consultation with parents, any affected educational institutions in the area (e.g. primary, secondary, special schools, sixth form and FE colleges as required) and other interested parties. The [consultation principles guidance](#) can be referenced for examples of good practice.

Before making any changes GBs should ensure that:

- they have consulted with the LA to ensure the proposal is aligned with local place planning arrangements
- they have secured any necessary funding;
- they have identified suitable accommodation and sites;



- they have secured planning permission and/or agreement on the transfer of land where necessary<sup>8</sup>. The proposal can be approved subject to planning permission being granted;
- they have the consent of the site trustees or other land owner where the land is not owned by the GB;
- where a school is designated as having a religious character, they have the consent of the trustees of the school, the diocese or relevant diocesan board, or any other relevant faith body, where appropriate; and
- the admissions authority is content for the published admissions number (PAN) to be changed where this forms part of expansion plans, in accordance with the School Admissions Code.

Once a decision on the change has been made, the proposer (i.e. LA or GB) is responsible for making arrangements for the necessary changes to be made to the school's record in the department's [GIAS](#) system. These changes must be made no later than the date of implementation for the change and can be input in advance, once a decision is made.

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<sup>8</sup> Including, where necessary, approval from the Secretary of State for change to the use of playing field land under Section 77(1) of the SSFA 1998.

## 5: Statutory process: prescribed alterations

The statutory process for making prescribed alterations to schools has four stages:

Stage	Description	Timescale	Comments
Stage 1	Publication (statutory proposal/notice)		
Stage 2	Representation (formal consultation)	Must be 4 weeks	As set out in the 'Prescribed Alterations' regulations
Stage 3	Decision	LA should decide a proposal within 2 months otherwise it will fall to the Schools Adjudicator	Any appeal to the adjudicator must be made within 4 weeks of the decision
Stage 4	Implementation	No prescribed timescale	It must be as specified in the published statutory notice, subject to any modifications agreed by the decision-maker

Although there is no longer a statutory 'pre-publication' consultation period for prescribed alteration changes, there is a strong expectation that schools and LAs will consult interested parties in developing their proposal prior to publication, to take into account all relevant considerations. Schools should have the consent of the site trustees and where a school is designated as having a religious character the trustees of the school, the diocese or relevant diocesan board, or any other relevant faith body.

When considering making a prescribed alteration change, it is best practice to take timing into account, for example:

- by holding consultations and public meetings (either formal or informal) during term time, rather than school holidays and, where appropriate, extend the consultation period if it overlaps school holidays etc;
- plan where any public and stakeholder meetings are held to maximise response;
- take into account the admissions cycle for changes that will impact on the school's admission arrangements.

A number of changes can impact admissions necessitating reductions in PAN, new relevant age groups for admission or the adoption of revised admission criteria. Changes to admission arrangements can be made by the admission authority in one of two ways:

- the consultation on changing the admission arrangements (as set out in the [School Admissions Code](#)) takes place sufficiently in advance of a decision on the prescribed alteration so that the change to admissions can be implemented at the same time as the proposals; or
- a variation is sought, where necessary, in view of a major change in circumstances, from the [Schools Adjudicator](#) so that the changes to the admission policy can be implemented at the same time as the prescribed alteration is implemented.

Decision-makers should, so far as is possible, co-ordinate with the admission authority, if different, to ensure they avoid taking decisions that will reduce a PAN or remove a relevant age group for admission after parents have submitted an application for the following September (e.g. 31 October for secondary admissions or 15 January for primary admissions).

## Publication

A statutory proposal must contain sufficient information for interested parties to make a decision on whether to support or challenge the proposed change. [Annex A](#) sets out the minimum that this should include. The proposal should be accessible to all interested parties and should therefore use 'plain English'.

Where the proposal for one change is linked to another, this should be made clear in any notices published. Where a proposal by a LA is 'related' to a proposal by other proposers (e.g. where one school is to be enlarged because another is being closed) a single notice could be published.

The full proposal must be published on a website (e.g. the school or LA's website) along with a statement setting out:

- how copies of the proposal may be obtained;
- that anybody can object to, or comment on, the proposal;
- the date that the representation period ends; and
- the address to which objections or comments should be submitted.

A brief notice (including details on how the full proposal can be accessed e.g. the website address) must be published in a local newspaper. If the proposal is published by a GB then notification must also be posted in a conspicuous place on the school premises and at all of the entrances to the school.

Within one week of the date of publication on the website, the proposer must send a copy of the proposal and the information set out in the paragraph above to:

- the GB/LA (as appropriate);
- the parents of every registered pupil at the school - where the school is a special school;
- if it involves or is likely to affect a school which has been designated as having a religious character:
  - the local Church of England diocese;
  - the local Roman Catholic diocese; or
  - the relevant faith group in relation to the school;
- proposals affecting a special school should go to any LA that has commissioned a place at the school (i.e. all relevant authorities who have made an out of county/borough placement there); and
- any other body or person that the proposer thinks is appropriate e.g. any affected educational institutions in the area.

Within one week of receiving a request for a copy of the proposal, the proposer must send a copy to the person requesting it.

There is no maximum limit on the time between the publication of a proposal and its proposed date of implementation. However, proposers will be expected to show good reason (for example an authority-wide reorganisation) if they propose a timescale longer than three years.

## **Representation (formal consultation)**

The representation period must last for four weeks from the date of the publication. During this period, any person or organisation can submit comments on the proposal to the LA to be taken into account by the decision-maker. It is also good practice for representations to be forwarded to the proposer to ensure that they are aware of local opinion.



## Decision

The LA will be the decision-maker in all cases except where a proposal is 'related' to another proposal that must be decided by the [Schools Adjudicator](#)<sup>9</sup>.

Decision-makers will need to be satisfied that the appropriate fair and open local consultation and/or representation period has been carried out and that the proposer has given full consideration to all the responses received. Decision-makers should not simply take account of the numbers of people expressing a particular view. Instead, they should give the greatest weight to responses from those stakeholders likely to be most affected by a proposal – especially parents of children at the affected school(s).

Decisions must be made within a period of two months of the end of the representation period or they must be referred to the Schools Adjudicator.

When issuing a decision, the decision-maker can:

- reject the proposal;
- approve the proposal without modification;
- approve the proposal with modifications, having consulted the LA and/or GB (as appropriate); or
- approve the proposal, with or without modification – subject to certain conditions<sup>10</sup> (such as the granting of planning permission) being met.

A proposal can be withdrawn by the proposer at any point before a decision is taken. When doing so, the proposer must send written notice to the LA or the GB (as appropriate); or the Schools Adjudicator (if the proposal has been sent to them). A notice must also be placed on the website where the original proposal was published.

Within one week of making a decision the LA must publish their decision and the reasons for it, on the website where the original proposal was published and send copies to:

- the LA (where the Schools Adjudicator is the decision-maker);
- the Schools Adjudicator (where the LA is the decision-maker);

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<sup>9</sup> For example where a change is conditional on the establishment of a new school under section 10 or 11 of EIA 2006 (where the Schools Adjudicator may be the default decision maker).

<sup>10</sup> The prescribed events are those listed in paragraph 8 of Schedule 3 to the Prescribed Alterations Regulations.

- the GB/proposers (as appropriate);
- the trustees of the school (if any);
- the local Church of England diocese;
- the local Roman Catholic diocese;
- the parents of every registered pupil at the school – where the school is a special school; and
- any other body that they think is appropriate (e.g. other relevant diocese or diocesan board, faith organisation and any affected educational institutions in the area).

If the [Schools Adjudicator](#) is the decision-maker they must notify the persons above of their decision, together with the reasons, within one week of making the decision. Within one week of receiving this notification the LA must publish the decision, with reasons, on the website where the original proposal was published.

## Related proposals

Where proposals appear to be related to other proposals, the decision-maker must consider the related proposals together. A proposal should be regarded as related if its implementation (or non-implementation) would prevent or undermine the effective implementation of another proposal.

## Conditional approval

For many types of proposal, decision-makers may make their approval conditional on certain prescribed kinds of events<sup>11</sup>. The decision-maker must set a date by which the condition should be met but can modify the date if the proposer confirms, before the date expires, that the condition will be met later than originally thought.

The proposer should inform the decision-maker when a condition is met. If a condition is not met by the date specified, the proposal should be referred back to the decision-maker for fresh consideration.

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<sup>11</sup> Under paragraph 8 of Schedule 3 to the Prescribed Alterations Regulations

## Education standards and diversity of provision

Decision-makers should consider the quality and diversity of schools in the relevant area and whether the proposal will meet or affect the needs of parents, raise local standards and narrow attainment gaps.

## Equal opportunities issues

The decision-maker must comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), which requires them to have 'due regard' to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not share it; and
- foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Further information on the considerations can be found on the [Equality and Human Rights Commission](#) website.

## Community cohesion

Schools have a key part to play in providing opportunities for young people from different backgrounds to learn with, from, and about each other; by encouraging through their teaching, an understanding of, and respect for, other cultures, faiths and communities. When considering a proposal, the decision-maker should consider its impact on community cohesion. This will need to be considered on a case-by-case basis, taking account of the community served by the school and the views of different groups within the community.

## Travel and accessibility

Decision-makers should satisfy themselves that accessibility planning has been properly taken into account and the proposed changes should not adversely impact on disadvantaged groups.

The decision-maker should bear in mind that a proposal should not unreasonably extend journey times or increase transport costs, or result in too many children being prevented from travelling sustainably due to unsuitable walking or cycling routes. A proposal should also be considered on the basis of how it will support and contribute to the LA's duty to promote the use of sustainable travel and transport to school.

Further information is available in the statutory [Home to school travel and transport guidance](#) for LAs.

## Funding

The decision-maker should be satisfied that any necessary funding required to implement the proposal will be available and that all relevant local parties (e.g. trustees of the school, diocese or relevant diocesan board) have given their agreement. A proposal **cannot** be approved conditionally upon funding being made available.

Where proposers are relying on the department as the source of capital funding, there can be no assumption that the approval of a proposal will trigger the release of capital funds from the department, unless the department has previously confirmed in writing that such resources will be available; nor can any allocation 'in principle' be increased. In such circumstances the proposal should be rejected, or consideration deferred until it is clear that the capital necessary to implement the proposal will be provided.

## Rights of appeal against a decision

The following bodies may appeal to the Schools Adjudicator against a decision made by a LA decision-maker, within four weeks of the decision being made:

- the local Church of England diocese;
- the local Roman Catholic diocese; and
- the governors and trustees of a foundation, foundation special or voluntary school that is subject to the proposal.

On receipt of an appeal, a LA decision-maker must then send the proposal, representations received and the reasons for their decision to the Schools Adjudicator within one week of receipt. There is no right of appeal on determinations made by the Schools Adjudicator.

## Implementation

The proposer must implement a proposal in the form that it was approved, taking into account any modifications made by the decision-maker.



## Modification post determination

Proposers can seek modifications from the decision-maker before the approved implementation date. However, proposals cannot be modified to the extent that new proposals are substituted for those that have been published.

Details of the modification must be published on the website where the original proposals were published.

## Revocation of proposals

If the proposer no longer wants to implement an approved proposal, they must publish a revocation proposal to be relieved of the duty to implement, as set out in the Prescribed Alterations Regulations.

## Land and buildings

### Foundation, foundation special or voluntary controlled schools

Where a LA is required to provide a site for a foundation, foundation special or voluntary controlled school, the LA must<sup>12</sup>:

- transfer their interest in the site and in any buildings on the site which are to form part of the school's premises to the trustees of the school, to be held by them on trust for the purposes of the school; or
- if the school has no trustees, to the GB, to be held by that body for the purposes of the school.

In the case of a dispute as to the persons to whom the LA is required to make the transfer, the adjudicator will make a decision.

### Voluntary aided schools

Where a LA is required to provide a site for a voluntary aided school, they must transfer their interest in the land to the trustees of the school, and must pay the reasonable costs to the GB in connection with the transfer.

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<sup>12</sup> Under paragraph 17 of schedule 3 of the Prescribed Alterations Regulations

## School premises and playing fields

Under the School Premises (England) Regulations 2012, all schools maintained by local authorities are required to provide suitable outdoor space in order to enable physical education to be provided to pupils in accordance with the school curriculum; and for pupils to play outside safely.

[Guidelines](#) setting out suggested areas for pitches and games courts are in place although the department has been clear that these are non-statutory.

## 6: Statutory process: foundation proposals

### Changing category to foundation, acquiring a foundation trust and/or acquiring a foundation majority

A 'foundation trust school' is a foundation school with a charitable foundation complying with the requirements set out in SSFA 1998<sup>13</sup>. These include that the foundation trust must have a charitable purpose of advancing education and must promote community cohesion.

The term 'acquire a foundation majority' means acquiring an instrument of government whereby the school's foundation trust has the power to appoint a majority of governors on the GB.

Where a school's GB considers changing category to foundation or acquiring a foundation trust and/or acquiring a foundation majority on the school's GB, the following five-stage statutory process must be followed:

Stage	Description	Timescale	Comments
Stage 1	Initiation		The GB considers a change of category to foundation/acquisition of a foundation trust/acquisition of a foundation majority
Stage 2	Publication		Having gained consent where appropriate
Stage 3	Representation (formal consultation)	Must be 4 weeks	As set out in the prescribed alteration regulations. The LA may refer a foundation trust proposal to the Schools Adjudicator during this period if it considers the proposal to have a negative effect on standards at the school
Stage 4	Decision	The GB must decide within 12 months of the date of publication	Unless the LA has referred the proposal to Schools Adjudicator at Stage 3
Stage 5	Implementation	No prescribed timescale	Must be as specified in the statutory notice, subject to any modifications agreed by the decision-maker

<sup>13</sup> Section 23A

## Initiation

For a proposal to change the category of a school to a foundation school, the GB should inform the LA in writing, at least seven days in advance of a meeting, if a motion to consult on a change of category proposal is to be discussed.

Before the GB can publish a proposal to change category from a voluntary school to a foundation school, the existing trustees and whoever appoints the foundation governors must give their consent.

## Publication

A statutory proposal must contain sufficient information for interested parties to make a decision on whether to support or challenge the proposed change. Part 1 of [Schedule 1 to the Prescribed Alterations Regulations](#) specifies the information that the statutory proposal must contain. Further details on the publication stage can be found in [Part 5](#).

## Representation (formal consultation)

The representation period starts on the date of the publication of the proposal and must last four weeks. During this period, any person or organisation can submit comments on the proposal to the GB, to be taken into account when the decision is made.

During the representation period, the LA has the power to require the referral of a proposal to acquire a foundation trust/foundation majority to the [Schools Adjudicator](#) for decision, if they consider it will have a negative impact on standards at the school.

The LA does not have this power in respect of a proposal solely to change the category to foundation<sup>14</sup>.

Where a proposal is referred to the [Schools Adjudicator](#), the GB must forward any objections or comments it has received to the Schools Adjudicator within one week of the end of the representation period.

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<sup>14</sup> However, where such a proposal is related to a proposal to acquire a trust, then the whole set of proposals will be referred to the Schools Adjudicator

## Decision

Unless a proposal has been referred to the Schools Adjudicator (as set out above), the GB will be the decision-maker and must make a decision on the proposal within 12 months of the date of publication of the proposal.

Where a proposal to acquire a foundation trust or a foundation majority is linked to a proposal to change category to a foundation school, they will be decided together.

When issuing a decision, the decision-maker can:

- reject the proposal;
- approve the proposal without modification;
- approve the proposal with modifications, having consulted the LA;
- approve the proposal with or without modifications but conditional upon:
  - the making of any scheme relating to any charity connected with the school; and
  - the establishment of a foundation<sup>15</sup>.

Where the LA has referred a proposal to acquire a foundation trust/foundation majority to the Schools Adjudicator for decision, any related proposal(s) (including a change of category to foundation) will also fall to be decided by the Schools Adjudicator.

Decision-makers should consider the impact of changing category to foundation school, and acquiring or removing a foundation trust on educational standards at the school. In assessing standards at the school, the decision-maker should take account of recent reports from Ofsted and a range of performance data. Recent trends in applications for places at the school (as a measure of popularity) and the local reputation of the school may also be relevant context for a decision.

If a proposal is not considered strong enough to significantly improve standards at a school that requires it, the decision maker should consider rejecting the proposal. Foundation trusts have a duty<sup>16</sup> to promote community cohesion, and decision-makers should carefully consider the foundation trust's plans for partnership working with other schools, agencies or voluntary bodies.

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<sup>15</sup> As defined in section 23A of the SSFA 1998

<sup>16</sup> Under section 23A(8) of the SSFA 1998



## Foundation schools acquiring a foundation trust

For foundation trust schools the decision-maker should be satisfied that the following criteria are met for the proposal to be approved:

- the proposal is not seeking for a school to alter, acquire, or lose a designated religious character. These alterations cannot be made simply by acquiring a foundation trust;
- the necessary work is underway to establish the foundation trust as a charity and as a corporate body; and
- that none of the foundation trustees are disqualified from exercising the function of foundation trustee, either by virtue of:
  - o disqualifications from working with children or young people;
  - o not having obtained a criminal record check certificate<sup>17</sup>;
  - o [Charities Act 2011](#)<sup>18</sup> which disqualify certain persons from acting as charity trustees.

## Suitability of partners

Decision-makers will need to be satisfied of the suitability of foundation trust partners and members. They should use their own discretion and judgement in determining on a case-by-case basis whether the reputation of a foundation trust partner is in keeping with the charitable objectives of a foundation trust, or could bring the school into disrepute. However, the decision-maker should make a balanced judgement, considering the suitability and reputation of the current/potential foundation trust.

The following sources may provide information on the history of potential foundation trust partners:

- [The Health and Safety Executive Public Register of Convictions](#)<sup>19</sup>
- [The Charity Commission's Register of Charities](#); and
- [The Companies House web check service](#).

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<sup>17</sup> Under section 113A of the Police Act 1997

<sup>18</sup> section 178 onwards

<sup>19</sup> Appearance on this database should not automatically disqualify a potential trust member; decision-makers will wish to consider each case on its merits

Within one week of making a decision the GB must publish a copy of the decision (together with reasons) on the website where the original proposal was published and send copies to:

- the LA;
- the local Church of England diocese; and
- the local Roman Catholic diocese.

Where a proposal has been decided by the GB and is to change the category of a VA school to foundation (with or without the acquisition of a foundation trust/foundation majority), the following bodies have the right of appeal to the [Schools Adjudicator](#)<sup>20</sup>:

- the LA;
- the local Church of England diocese(s); and
- the local Roman Catholic diocese(s).

## Conditional approval

For many types of proposal, decision-makers may make their approval conditional on certain prescribed kinds of events<sup>21</sup>. The decision-maker must set a date by which the condition should be met but can modify the date if the proposer confirms, before the date expires, that the condition will be met later than originally thought.

The proposer should inform the decision-maker when a condition is met. If a condition is not met by the date specified, the proposal should be referred back to the decision-maker for fresh consideration.

## Implementation

The GB must implement any approved proposal by the approved implementation date, taking into account any modifications made by the decision-maker.

Within one week of implementation, the GB must provide information to the Secretary of State<sup>22</sup> about foundation proposals that have been implemented. Copies of the statutory proposals and decision record should be submitted to

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<sup>20</sup> The specific circumstances in which a referral can be made are prescribed under paragraph 15 of Schedule 1 to the Prescribed Alterations Regulations

<sup>21</sup> under paragraph 16 of Schedule 1 to the Prescribed Alterations Regulations

<sup>22</sup> Paragraph 18 of Schedule 1 of the Prescribed Alterations Regulations

[schoolorganisation.notifications@education.gov.uk](mailto:schoolorganisation.notifications@education.gov.uk) in order for the school record to be updated on GIAS.

## **Modification post determination**

Modifications can be made to a proposal by the governing body after determination but before implementation.

## **Revocation**

If the proposer no longer wants to implement an approved proposal they must publish a revocation proposal to be relieved of the duty to implement, as set out in Paragraph 19 of Schedule 1 of the Prescribed Alterations Regulations.

## **Governance and staffing issues**

Schedule 4 of the Prescribed Alterations Regulations provides further information on the requirements about:

- the revision or replacement of the school's instrument of government;
- reconstitution or replacement of the GB;
- current governors continuing in office;
- surplus governors;
- transfer of staff; and
- transitional admission arrangements.

## **Land transfer issues**

Requirements as to land transfers, when a school changes category or acquires a foundation trust, are prescribed in Schedule 5 of the Prescribed Alterations Regulations.



## Removing a foundation trust and/or removing a foundation majority

There are five or six statutory stages (depending on the proposal and circumstances) to remove a foundation trust and/or to reduce a foundation majority. It may be triggered in two different ways – either by a majority or a minority of the GB:

Stage	Description	Timescale	Comments
Stage 1	Initiation		<p><b>Majority</b> A majority of governors considers publishing a proposal to remove a foundation trust/reduce the number of governors appointed by the foundation.</p> <p>or</p> <p><b>Minority</b> A minority (of not less than a third of the governors) notify the clerk of the GB of their wish to publish a proposal to remove a foundation trust/reduce the number of governors appointed by the foundation</p>
Stage 2	Land Issues  (applicable only to removal of trusts)	If not resolved within 3 months, disputes must be referred to the Schools Adjudicator	In cases of removing foundation trusts, the GB, trustees and the LA must resolve issues related to land and assets before a proposal is published
Stage 3	Consultation	<p><b>Majority</b> A minimum of 4 weeks is recommended.</p> <p>or</p> <p><b>Minority</b> No consultation required</p>	<b>Majority</b> It is for the GB to determine the length of consultation
Stage 4	Publication and representation	<p><b>Majority</b> 6 week representation period.</p> <p>or</p> <p><b>Minority</b></p>	

Stage	Description	Timescale	Comments
		Where there are no land or asset issues – publish within 3 months of receipt of notice by GB clerk – followed by a 6-week representation period.  Where there are land issues, publish within 1 month of receipt of School Adjudicator's determination – followed by a 6-week representation period	
Stage 5	Decision	Within 3 months	A proposal initiated by a minority of governors may not be rejected unless at least two-thirds of the GB are in favour of the rejection
Stage 6	Implementation	No prescribed timescale	But must be as specified in the statutory notice, subject to any modifications agreed by the decision-maker

## Initiation

A proposal for removing a foundation trust and/or removing a foundation majority can be triggered by:

- a) a majority<sup>23</sup> of the GB or a committee deciding to publish a proposal. The decision to publish must be confirmed by the whole GB at a meeting held at least 28 days after the meeting at which the initial decision was made; or
- b) at least one-third<sup>24</sup> of the governors requesting in writing to the clerk of the GB, that a proposal be published. No vote of the GB is required as they are obliged to publish a proposal. To prevent on-going challenges

<sup>23</sup> Regulation 4 of the Removal Regulations

<sup>24</sup> Regulation 5 of the Removal Regulations

there are a number of prescribed circumstances<sup>25</sup> in which there is no obligation to follow the wishes of the minority of governors.

### **Land and assets (when removing a foundation trust)**

Before publishing proposals to remove a foundation trust, the GB must reach agreement with the trustees and LA on issues relating to the school's land and assets. Where such issues remain unresolved within three months of the initial decision (majority) or receipt of notice by the clerk (minority), they must be referred to the [Schools Adjudicator](#) for determination.

On the removal of the foundation trust, all publicly provided land held by the foundation trust for the purposes of the school will transfer to the GB<sup>26</sup>. Where the land originated from private sources (for example, where land was gifted on trust), the land will transfer to the GB in accordance with a transfer agreement, providing for consideration to be paid by the GB to the foundation trust where appropriate. However, there may be land which has benefited from investment from public funds which remains with the trustees under the transfer agreement.

Alternatively, there may have been investment by trustees in the publicly provided land or from public funding in the land provided by the trustees. In either of these cases, it may be appropriate for either the trustees or the public purse to be compensated. The possibility of stamp duty land tax may also need to be taken into account.

The Schools Adjudicator will announce its determination in writing to both parties.

### **Consultation**

Where a minority of governors initiated the process, this stage does not apply.

Where a majority of governors initiated the process, before publishing a proposal the GB must consult:

- families of pupils at the school;
- teachers and other staff at the school;
- the trustees and, if different, whoever appoints foundation governors;
- the LA;

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<sup>25</sup> See regulation 5(4) of the Removal Regulations

<sup>26</sup> By virtue of regulation 17(1) of the Removal Regulations

- the GBs of any other foundation or foundation special schools maintained by the same LA for which the foundation acts as a foundation;
- any trade unions who represent school staff;
- if the school has been designated as having a religious character, the appropriate diocesan authority or other relevant faith group in relation to the school;
- any other person the GB consider appropriate.

## Publication

Where the decision to publish a proposal was made by a majority of governors, the GB at this stage must decide whether to go ahead with publishing the proposal.

Where the decision to publish a proposal was made by a minority of governors and there are no land issues to be determined, the GB must publish the proposal within 3 months of the receipt of the notice by the clerk. If land issues were referred to the [Schools Adjudicator](#), the proposal must be published within 1 month of receipt of its determination.

Proposals to remove a foundation trust or to alter the instrument of government so that foundation governors cease to be the majority of governors must contain the information set out in [The School Organisation \(Removal of Foundation, Reduction in Number of Foundation Governors and Ability of Foundation to Pay Debts\) \(England\) Regulations 2007](#). Further details on the publication stage can be found in [Part 5](#).

At the same time as publishing the proposals, the GB must send copies of the proposals to the LA, trustees, and the Secretary of State via [schoolorganisation.notifications@education.gov.uk](mailto:schoolorganisation.notifications@education.gov.uk).

## Representation

The representation period starts on the date of the publication of the proposal and must last six weeks. During this period, any person or organisation can submit comments on the proposal to the GB to be taken into account when the decision is made.

Unlike the foundation trust acquisition process, there is no power for the LA to refer a proposal to the Schools Adjudicator to remove a school's foundation trust or to reduce the number of governors appointed by the foundation trust. However, GBs



must bear in mind that failure to follow the requirements of the statutory process could lead to a complaint to the Secretary of State under Section 496/497 of the Education Act 1996, and/or ultimately be challenged through judicial review.

## Decision

The GB is the decision-maker for a removal proposal and must determine the proposal within 3 months of the date of its publication.

If a proposal was brought forward by a majority of governors, then it may be determined by a majority vote of those governors present<sup>27</sup>.

If a proposal was brought forward by a minority of governors, then the GB may not reject the proposal unless two thirds or more of the governors indicate that they are in favour of its rejection<sup>28</sup>.

When deciding a proposal for the removal of a foundation trust, the GB should consider the proposal in the context of the original proposal to acquire the foundation trust, and consider whether the foundation trust has fulfilled its expectations. Where new information has come to light regarding the suitability of foundation trust partners, this should be considered.

All decisions must be taken in accordance with the processes prescribed in [The School Governance \(Roles, Procedures and Allowances\) \(England\) Regulations 2013](#)<sup>29</sup>.

The GB must notify the relevant LA, trustees and the Secretary of State via [schoolorganisation.notifications@education.gov.uk](mailto:schoolorganisation.notifications@education.gov.uk) of their decision.

## Implementation

The GB is under a statutory duty to implement any approved proposal, as published, by the approved implementation date, taking into account any modifications made. In changing category, an implementation period begins when the proposal is decided and ends on the date the proposal is implemented. During this period the LA and GB are required to make a new instrument of government for the school, so enough time must be built into the timeframe for this to happen. The GB must then be reconstituted in a form appropriate to the school's new category and also in accordance with the appropriate instrument of government taking into account the [School Governance \(Constitution\) \(England\) Regulations 2012](#).

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<sup>27</sup> As per the School Governance (Roles, Procedures and Allowances) (England) Regulations 2013

<sup>28</sup> As per regulation 11(2) of the Removal Regulations

<sup>29</sup> Except as otherwise provided by the Removal Regulations.

When removing a foundation trust or a foundation majority, a governor may continue as a governor in the corresponding category (e.g. staff governor, parent governor) if that category remains under the new instrument of government. A member of a current GB who continues as a governor on these grounds holds office for the remainder of the term for which he or she was originally appointed or elected. Where a school with a religious character has no foundation trust, the GB must appoint partnership governors with a view to ensuring that the religious character of the school is preserved and developed in accordance with the School Governance (Constitution) (England) Regulations 2012. There is nothing to prevent the appointment of a former foundation governor being reappointed by the GB as a partnership governor.

The terms of the trust on which land is held for a voluntary or foundation school often include very specific provisions regarding the conduct of the school and the use of any fund held by the foundation trust for the use of the school and premises. When making a proposal to change category, proposers will need to consider whether the current terms on which the school's land is held on trust allows for the change in category proposed. If in doubt, or if a variation in the foundation trust is clearly necessary, promoters and the relevant site trustees are advised to make early contact with the Charity Commission to apply for the terms of the trust to be varied under the relevant trust law.

## **Modification of proposals**

Modifications can only be made to the implementation date and the proposed constitution of the governing body.

## **Annex A: Information to be included in a prescribed alteration statutory proposal**

A statutory proposal for making a prescribed alteration to a school must contain sufficient information for interested parties to make a decision on whether to support the proposed change. A proposal should be accessible to all interested parties and therefore use 'plain English'.

Proposers will need to be mindful of the factors that will inform the decision-makers assessment when determining the proposal.

As a minimum, the department would expect a proposal to include:

- school and LA details;
- description of alteration and evidence of demand;
- objectives (including how the proposal would increase educational standards and parental choice);
- the effect on other educational institutions within the area;
- project costs and indication of how these will be met, including how long-term value for money will be achieved;
- implementation plan; and
- a statement explaining the procedure for responses: support, objections and comments.

## Annex B: Further Information

This guidance primarily relates to:

- [The School Organisation \(Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools\) \(England\) Regulations 2013](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukSI/2013/3110/contents/made)  
[www.legislation.gov.uk/ukSI/2013/3110/contents/made](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukSI/2013/3110/contents/made)
- [The School Organisation \(Removal of Foundation, Reduction in Number of Foundation Governors and Ability of Foundation to Pay Debts\) \(England\) Regulations 2007](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukSI/2007/3475/contents/made) [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukSI/2007/3475/contents/made](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukSI/2007/3475/contents/made)
- [The School Organisation \(Requirements as to Foundations\) \(England\) Regulations 2007](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukSI/2007/1287/contents/made) [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukSI/2007/1287/contents/made](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukSI/2007/1287/contents/made)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/40)  
[www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/40](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/40)
- [The School Standards and Framework Act 1998](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/31/contents)  
[www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/31/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/31/contents)

It also relates to:

- [The School Organisation \(Establishment and Discontinuance of Schools\) Regulations 2013](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukSI/2013/3109/contents/made) [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukSI/2013/3109/contents/made](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukSI/2013/3109/contents/made)
- [The School Governance \(Constitution\) \(England\) Regulations 2012](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukSI/2012/1034/contents/made)  
[www.legislation.gov.uk/ukSI/2012/1034/contents/made](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukSI/2012/1034/contents/made)
- [The School Governance \(Constitution and Federations\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2014](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukSI/2014/1257/pdfs/ukSI_20141257_en.pdf)  
[www.legislation.gov.uk/ukSI/2014/1257/pdfs/ukSI\\_20141257\\_en.pdf](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukSI/2014/1257/pdfs/ukSI_20141257_en.pdf)
- [The School Governance \(Miscellaneous Amendments\) \(England\) Regulations 2015](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukSI/2015/883/pdfs/ukSI_20150883_en.pdf) [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukSI/2015/883/pdfs/ukSI\\_20150883\\_en.pdf](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukSI/2015/883/pdfs/ukSI_20150883_en.pdf)
- [The School Governance \(New Schools\) \(England\) Regulations 2007](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukSI/2007/958/pdfs/ukSI_20070958_en.pdf)  
[www.legislation.gov.uk/ukSI/2007/958/pdfs/ukSI\\_20070958\\_en.pdf](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukSI/2007/958/pdfs/ukSI_20070958_en.pdf)
- [The School Governance \(Roles, Procedures and Allowances\) \(England\) Regulations 2013](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukSI/2013/1624/contents/made) [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukSI/2013/1624/contents/made](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukSI/2013/1624/contents/made)
- [The Childcare Act 2006](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/21/contents) [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/21/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/21/contents)
- [The School Premises \(England\) Regulations 2012](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukSI/2012/1943/contents/made)  
[www.legislation.gov.uk/ukSI/2012/1943/contents/made](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukSI/2012/1943/contents/made)



- [Making Significant Changes to an Existing Academy](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/making-significant-changes-to-an-existing-academy)  
www.gov.uk/government/publications/making-significant-changes-to-an-existing-academy
- [Academy/Free School Presumption – departmental advice](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/establishing-a-new-school-free-school-presumption)  
www.gov.uk/government/publications/establishing-a-new-school-free-school-presumption
- [Establishing New Maintained Schools – departmental advice for local authorities and new school proposers](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/establishing-new-maintained-schools)  
www.gov.uk/government/publications/establishing-new-maintained-schools
- [The School Admissions Code](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-admissions-code--2) www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-admissions-code--2
- [Education Act 1996](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/56/contents) www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/56/contents
- [Equality Act 2010](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents) www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents
- [Police Act 1997](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1997/50/contents) www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1997/50/contents
- [Charities Act 2011](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2011/25/contents) www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2011/25/contents
- [Public Sector Equality Duty](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/public-sector-equality-duty) www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/public-sector-equality-duty
- [Home-to-school travel and transport - GOV.UK](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/home-to-school-travel-and-transport-guidance)  
www.gov.uk/government/publications/home-to-school-travel-and-transport-guidance
- [Get information about schools - GOV.UK](http://www.get-information-schools.service.gov.uk/) www.get-information-schools.service.gov.uk/
- [Consultation principles: guidance - GOV.UK](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/consultation-principles-guidance)  
www.gov.uk/government/publications/consultation-principles-guidance
- [School land and property: protection, transfer and disposal - GOV.UK](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/school-land-and-property-protection-transfer-and-disposal)  
www.gov.uk/guidance/school-land-and-property-protection-transfer-and-disposal

## Annex C: Contact details for RSC offices

- East and North East London - [RSC.EASTNELONDON@education.gov.uk](mailto:RSC.EASTNELONDON@education.gov.uk)
- North - [RSC.NORTH@education.gov.uk](mailto:RSC.NORTH@education.gov.uk)
- East Midlands and Humber - [EMH.RSC@education.gov.uk](mailto:EMH.RSC@education.gov.uk)
- Lancashire and West Yorkshire - [LWY.RSC@education.gov.uk](mailto:LWY.RSC@education.gov.uk)
- South Central England and North West London - [RSC.SCNWLON@education.gov.uk](mailto:RSC.SCNWLON@education.gov.uk)
- South East and South London - [RSC.SESL@education.gov.uk](mailto:RSC.SESL@education.gov.uk)
- South West - [RSC.SW@education.gov.uk](mailto:RSC.SW@education.gov.uk)
- West Midlands - [RSC.WM@education.gov.uk](mailto:RSC.WM@education.gov.uk)



## Equality Impact Assessment

***To be completed for all key changes, decisions and proposals. Cite specific data and consultation evidence wherever possible. Further guidance is available at:***

***<http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=3281>***

***Duties which need to be considered:***

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

### **PART 1 – Overview of the change, decision or proposal**

**1) Title of the change, decision or proposal:**

Statutory proposals to relocate Atkinson House Special School to the former Richard Coates building in Ponteland, increase the planned pupil numbers from 80 to 100 and change the designation of the school to become co-educational. The former Richard Coates building is adjacent to Richard Coates CE Primary School and to Little Tinklers Nursery.

**2) Brief description of the change, decision or proposal:**

The Council carried out informal consultation on a proposal to relocate Atkinson House Special School from its current location in Seghill to a former school building in Ponteland with effect from September 2022 from 13 October to 1 December 2021. Following approval by the Council's Cabinet on 11 January 2022, a statutory proposal to relocated Atkinson House Special School to the former site of Richard Coates, increase its planned pupil numbers from 80 to 100 and to change the designation of the school from single sex for boys to co-educational and thereby include specific provision for girls with SEMH. The rationale for this proposal is generally to be able to accommodate the growing numbers of young people in the county being identified with SEMH needs including girls, and in particular to accommodate the students who would have been offered places at the new Gilbert Ward Academy free school had it's opening not been delayed until September 2023.

This EIA has been updated in light of the statutory consultation undertaken in line with DfE guidance.

3) If you judge that this proposal is **not** relevant to some protected characteristics, tick these below (and explain underneath how you have reached this judgement).

Disability   Sex   Age   ~~Race~~   ~~Religion~~   Sexual orientation

~~People who have changed gender~~   Women who are pregnant or have babies

Employees who are married/in civil partnerships

4) The characteristics checked above are not relevant because:

In the medium to long-term, there is no reason to believe that the proposed statutory proposal would affect more positively or negatively than their peers any group of children, parents or staff defined by their religion, race or gender-reassignment status. Should the Council decide to implement the proposed statutory proposal at a future date, during the immediate process of transition, families would be invited to inform the Council that they are concerned about the impact that the change may have on the support networks for any individual children who may be at particular risk of harassment or discrimination. Reasonable adjustments would be made to support individual students where appropriate.

It is not envisaged that this proposal would result in the need for staff redundancies at Atkinson House Special School and indeed there are likely to be additional opportunities for employment. In the event, existing HR policies covering relocation of a place of work would apply to staff employed at any of the school where appropriate. These are designed to ensure that the equalities duties of the Council and the schools are fully met. Reasonable adjustments would be made for disabled members of staff. The Council operates a guaranteed interview scheme for disabled members of staff.

## **PART 2 – Relevance to different Protected Characteristics**

*Answer these questions both in relation to people who use services and employees*

### **Disability**

**Note:** “disabled people” includes people with physical, learning and sensory disabilities, people with a long-term illness, and people with mental health problems. You should consider potential impacts on all of these groups.

5) What do you know about usage of the services affected by this change, decision or proposal by disabled people, about disabled people’s experiences of it, and about any current barriers to access?

All students on roll at Atkinson House Special School have an EHCP for SEMH special educational needs and therefore would be disproportionately impacted should the approval be given to implement the proposal at a future date. The intention of the proposal is that it would have a positive impact on Atkinson House students and future students. Students views on the proposal have been gained as part of the informal consultation process and the majority are in favour of the

proposal. However, a number of students did have some concerns around the move to the alternative site in Ponteland.

The staff of Atkinson House Special school are trained to manage the anxieties that could arise with this group of students as result of this proposal it was approved for implementation. Staff would plan to have a phased approach to the transition with students if the relocation goes ahead, including individual transition plans according to need, to ensure that the impact of the transition is minimal and managed effectively.

Any parent or a carer of a student at Atkinson House Special School or member of staff at the school who has a disability would not be affected disproportionately by the proposal as any reasonable adjustments or arrangements already in place to support a parent, pupil or staff member would be re-provided at the new location and appropriate reasonable adjustments would be made.

It is not expected that any member of staff at one of the adjacent educational settings, parents of pupils at these settings or members of the public would have need of regular access to the grounds or building of Atkinson House Special School should it relocate to the former Richard Coates building.

6) Could disabled people be disproportionately advantaged or disadvantaged by the change, decision or proposal?

Refer to para. 5

7) Could the change, decision or proposal affect the ability of disabled people to participate in public life? (e.g., by affecting their ability to go to meetings, take up public appointments etc.)

It is not envisaged that the implementation of the proposed statutory proposal would affect any current arrangements for disabled people to participate in public life as the former Richard Coates building is currently empty and not used by any other Council service or by members of the community.

8) Could the change, decision or proposal affect public attitudes towards disabled people? (e.g., by increasing or reducing their presence in the community)

There is a possibility that public attitudes towards young people with SEMH could be impacted by the relocation of Atkinson House Special School to Ponteland. There is no specialist SEND provision within the Ponteland Partnership of schools, either as stand-alone provision or within any of the schools in the partnership.

Feedback received from those consultees who responded during the informal consultation indicates that there is some anxiety among staff at the adjacent educational settings, parents of pupils at these settings and members of the public about the possible behaviour of students at Atkinson House Special School as a result of their SEMH needs.

Should the proposal be approved, appropriate safeguarding measures would be put in place to ensure that all students (including those on roll at Atkinson House) are safe and that all 3 educational provisions and the wider public feel safe.

While there has been some positive feedback from the public about the proposal, there has been a minor element of public feedback that has demonstrated a lack of understanding of the condition of SEMH and use of offensive statements towards this group of vulnerable young people.

Assimilation of the school into the Ponteland community would need to be very carefully managed to engender good and collaborative relationships, and the Governing Body and Leadership Team of the school are fully cognisant of this need.

9) Could the change, decision or proposal make it more or less likely that disabled people will be at risk of harassment or victimisation?

Further to para. 8, there could be a risk of harassment or victimisation of young people attending Atkinson House Special school if the transition is not managed effectively and the school is not able to assimilate within the community.

The measures set out in para. 8 regarding relationships with adjacent settings and the wider community would need to be put in place.

10) If there are risks that disabled people could be disproportionately disadvantaged by the change, decision or proposal, are there reasonable steps or adjustments that could be taken to reduce these risks?

The premise of the proposal is that the educational experience of young people attending Atkinson House would be enhanced by the relocation to the former Richard Coates building and therefore there is a disproportionate advantage of the proposal to them.

11) Are there opportunities to create *positive* impacts for disabled people linked to this change, decision or proposal?

Refer to para. 10.

## **Sex (Gender)**

12) What do you know about usage of the services affected by this change, decision or proposal in relation to people of a certain gender, about their experiences of it, and about any current barriers to access?

Currently Atkinson House Special School is designated as a single sex provision for boys diagnosed with SEMH special educational needs aged 11 to 16. Under the proposal, the school would not only relocate, but would extend its provision to secondary aged girls diagnosed with SEMH as there is no dedicated provision currently for them in Northumberland.

13) Could people of a certain gender be disproportionately advantaged or disadvantaged by the change, decision or proposal?

While the proposal to relocate the school would advantage the current and future cohort of boys attending Atkinson House Special School, it would disproportionately advantage girls as provision for them would start to be offered at the school.

14) Could the change, decision or proposal affect the ability of people of a certain gender to participate in public life? (e.g., by affecting their ability to go to meetings, take up public appointments etc.)

There is currently no evidence from consultation to suggest that the ability of people of a certain gender to participate in public life would be affected by the implementation of the statutory proposal. However, ameliorating actions stated in para. 5 would be implemented in the event that issues were identified.

15) Could the change, decision or proposal affect public attitudes towards people of a certain gender (e.g., by increasing or reducing their presence in the community)

To date, there has been no evidence to suggest that public attitudes to people with people of a certain gender. However, ameliorating actions such as those stated in para. 5 would be implemented in the event that issues were identified.

16) Could the change, decision or proposal make it more or less likely that people of a certain gender will be at risk of harassment or victimisation?

Should the statutory proposal be implemented, the risk of harassment of victimisation of people of a certain gender would be monitored. Should evidence be identified that risk of harassment had increased, the relevant actions such as those stated in paragraph 5 would be implemented.

There is currently no evidence to suggest that any member of the public, pupil in one of the adjacent education settings, parent of a pupil in one of the adjacent education settings or member of staff at one of the adjacent education settings of certain genders would be more or less likely to be at risk of harassment or victimisation should approval be given to implement the proposal. However, should any of member of this protected group of people be identified as at risk as a result of the implementation of this proposal, the authority would encourage staff of Atkinson House Special School to put in place amelioration actions and suitable education programmes to increase awareness of any potential issues such as increased risk of bullying.

17) If there are risks that people of a certain gender could be disproportionately disadvantaged by the change, decision or proposal, are there reasonable steps or adjustments that could be taken to reduce these risks?

No evidence has so far been identified to suggest that people of a certain gender could be disproportionately disadvantaged through the implementation of the



proposal. However, ameliorating actions stated in para. 2 would be implemented in the event that issues were identified.

18) Are there opportunities to create *positive* impacts for people with different sexual orientations linked to this change, decision or proposal?

While none have been so far identified, any opportunities to create positive impacts for people with different genders would be implemented.

## **Age**

19) What do you know about usage of the services affected by this change, decision or proposal by people of different age groups, about their experiences of it, and about any current barriers to access?

Atkinson House Special School provides specialist education to pupils with SEMH needs between 11 and 16 and it is this group of young people who would be most affected by the proposal.

Staff at the school are employed equitably in accordance with the relevant school and council's employment policies. No staff at the school would be at risk of redundancy should the proposal be approved for implementation and indeed there may be additional staff required as a result of the proposed increase in student numbers and redesignation to become co-educational.

20) Could people of different age groups be disproportionately advantaged or disadvantaged by the change, decision or proposal?

All students on roll at Atkinson House Special School have an EHCP for SEMH special educational needs and therefore would be disproportionately impacted should the approval be given to implement the proposal at a future date. The intention of the proposal is that it would have a positive impact on Atkinson House students and future students.

21) Could the change, decision or proposal affect the ability of people of different age groups to participate in public life? (e.g., by affecting their ability to go to meetings, take up public appointments etc.)

There is no evidence to suggest that the proposed statutory proposal would have any effect on the ability of different age groups to participate in public life.

22) Could the change, decision or proposal affect public attitudes towards people of different age groups? (e.g., by increasing or reducing their presence in the community)

There is a possibility that public attitudes towards young people with SEMH could be impacted by the relocation of Atkinson House Special School to Ponteland, but more as a result of the SEMH needs rather than their age.

Refer to para. 8 for further information.

23) Could the change, decision or proposal make it more or less likely that people of different age groups will be at risk of harassment or victimisation?

There could be a risk of harassment or victimisation of the young people attending Atkinson House Special school if the transition is not managed effectively and the school is not able to assimilate within the community.

From consultation feedback, there is a level of concern from some consultees who responded regarding the potential behaviour of Atkinson House Special School students in the Ponteland community and therefore there could be a perceived risk of harassment. As stated, the Governing Body and Leadership team of the school would be keen to build relationships with their adjacent educational settings and the wider community to reduce any levels of concern about the presence of students with SEMH and provide a wider understanding of their needs.

24) If there are risks that people of different age groups could be disproportionately disadvantaged by the change, decision or proposal, are there reasonable steps or adjustments that could be taken to reduce these risks?

Ref. Para. 23.

25) Are there opportunities to create *positive* impacts for people of different age groups linked to this change, decision or proposal?

The premise of the proposal is to create a positive impact for this group of young people with SEMH needs.

Through the Governing Body and Leadership team of the school working with their educational neighbours and the wider community there could be opportunities to broaden their understanding of special educational needs and in particular SEMH which could be to their advantage.

## **Pregnancy and Maternity**

*Note: the law covers pregnant women or those who have given birth within the last 26 weeks, and those who are breast feeding.*

26) What do you know about usage of the services affected by this change, decision or proposal by pregnant women and those who have children under 26 weeks, about their experiences of it, and about any current barriers to access?

There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal would create any barriers to students of Atkinson House Special School accessing the school should it relocate to Ponteland as all student as they would receive Home to School Transport.

In addition, any parent of a student at Atkinson House who may be pregnant or who has other children under 26 weeks old would not be disadvantaged due to the eligibility of students for transport.

Any staff of Atkinson House Special School who may be pregnant would have the same rights extended to them at the proposed site as at the current school site.

27) Could pregnant women and those with children under 26 weeks be disproportionately advantaged or disadvantaged by the change, decision or proposal?

No, for the reasons set out in para.26.

28) Could the change, decision or proposal affect the ability of pregnant women or those with children under 26 weeks participate in public life? (e.g., by affecting their ability to go to meetings, take up public appointments etc.)

No, for the reasons set out in para.26.

29) Could the change, decision or proposal affect public attitudes towards pregnant women or those with children under 26 weeks? (e.g., by increasing or reducing their presence in the community)

There is no evidence to suggest that the statutory proposal would have any effect on public attitudes to this protected group under the proposals.

30) Could the change, decision or proposal make it more or less likely that pregnant women or those with children under 26 weeks will be at risk of harassment or victimisation?

No evidence has arisen during consultation to suggest that the statutory proposal would make it more or less likely that this protected group would be at risk of harassment or victimisation under the proposals.

31) If there are risks that pregnant women or those with children under 26 weeks could be disproportionately disadvantaged by the change, decision or proposal, are there reasonable steps or adjustments that could be taken to reduce these risks?

No evidence has been identified during the consultation period that would suggest that the protected group could be disproportionately disadvantaged by the implementation of the statutory proposal for the reasons set out above.

However, if a decision is made to take the next steps towards implementation of the statutory proposal, and any disproportionate disadvantages are identified during the subsequent phases of consultation and implementation, these would be reviewed and solutions to remove such disadvantages would be sought.

32) Are there opportunities to create *positive* impacts for pregnant women or those with children under 26 weeks linked to this change, decision or proposal?

Ref. para. 26.

## **Sexual Orientation**

*Note: The Act protects bisexual, gay, heterosexual and lesbian people.*

33) What do you know about usage of the services affected by this change, decision or proposal by people with different sexual orientations, about their experiences of it, and about any current barriers to access?

There is currently no evidence to suggest that any student on roll at Atkinson House Special School or a member of staff who identifies as LGBT would be disproportionately impacted positively or negatively should approval be given to implement the proposal.

However, should any pupil or member of staff who identifies with this group be identified as requiring support, the authority would encourage staff of Atkinson House Special School to use the Stonewall Education champion's resources and to increase awareness of any potential issues such as increased risk of bullying.

Should a member of staff identifying as LGBT in Atkinson House Special School feel that their support networks have been disrupted, staff would be made aware of the support available through the Council's LGBT staff group and managers will be made aware of the guide to supporting LGBT staff on the Council Equality and Diversity webpage. HR policies aim to promote equality and inclusion.

34) Could people with different sexual orientations be disproportionately advantaged or disadvantaged by the change, decision or proposal?

There is currently no evidence from consultation to suggest that different sexual orientations would be disproportionately advantaged or disadvantaged by the implementation of the statutory proposal. However, ameliorating actions stated in para. 33 would be implemented in the event that issues were identified.

35) Could the change, decision or proposal affect the ability of people with different sexual orientations to participate in public life? (e.g., by affecting their ability to go to meetings, take up public appointments etc.)

There is currently no evidence from consultation to suggest that the ability of people with different sexual orientations to participate in public life would be affected by the implementation of the statutory proposal. However, ameliorating actions stated in para. 33 would be implemented in the event that issues were identified.

36) Could the change, decision or proposal affect public attitudes towards people with different sexual orientations? (e.g., by increasing or reducing their presence in the community)

To date, there has been no evidence to suggest that public attitudes to people with different sexual orientations. However, ameliorating actions stated in para. 33 would be implemented in the event that issues were identified.

37) Could the change, decision or proposal make it more or less likely that people with different sexual orientations will be at risk of harassment or victimisation?

Should the statutory proposal be implemented, the risk of harassment or victimisation of people with different sexual orientations would be monitored. Should evidence be identified that risk of harassment had increased, the relevant actions stated in paragraph 33 would be implemented.

There is currently no evidence to suggest that any member of the public, pupil in one of the adjacent education settings, parent of a pupil in one of the adjacent education settings or member of staff at one of the adjacent education settings who identifies as LGBT would be more or less likely to be at risk of harassment or victimisation should the approval be given to implement the proposal. However, should any of this group of people who identifies within this protected group be identified as at risk as a result of the implementation of this proposal, the authority would encourage the staff of Atkinson House Special School to use the Stonewall Education champion's resources and to increase awareness of any potential issues such as increased risk of bullying

38) If there are risks that people with different sexual orientations could be disproportionately disadvantaged by the change, decision or proposal, are there reasonable steps or adjustments that could be taken to reduce these risks?

No evidence has so far been identified to suggest that people with different sexual orientations could be disproportionately disadvantaged through the implementation of the statutory proposal. However, ameliorating actions stated in para. 33 would be implemented in the event that issues were identified.

39) Are there opportunities to create *positive* impacts for people with different sexual orientations linked to this change, decision or proposal?

While none have been so far identified, any opportunities to create positive impacts for people with different sexual orientations would be implemented, possibly through the implementation of the actions set out in para. 33.

## Human Rights

40) Could the change, decision or proposal impact on human rights? (e.g., the right to respect for private and family life, the right to a fair hearing and the right to education)

While there is no specific evidence to suggest that the implementation of the proposal would impact positively on human rights, the rationale for this proposal is to provide additional and appropriate educational support and facilities for a vulnerable group of young people with SEMH needs and therefore this would improve the life chances of the students.

### PART 3 - Course of Action

Based on a consideration of all the potential impacts, indicate one of the following as an overall summary of the outcome of this assessment:

	The equality analysis has not identified any potential for discrimination or adverse impact and all opportunities to promote equality have been taken.
X	The equality analysis has identified risks or opportunities to promote better equality; the change, decision or proposal would be adjusted to avoid risks and ensure that opportunities are taken should they be required.
	The equality analysis has identified risks to equality which will not be eliminated, and/or opportunities to promote better equality which will not be taken. Acceptance of these is reasonable and proportionate, given the objectives of the change, decision or proposal, and its overall financial and policy context.
	The equality analysis shows that the change, decision or proposal would lead to actual or potential unlawful discrimination or would conflict with the Council's positive duties to an extent which is disproportionate to its objectives. It should not be adopted in its current form.

41) Explain how you have reached the judgement ticked above and summarise any steps which will be taken to reduce negative or enhance positive impacts on equality.

From the initial analysis of the possible negative or positive impacts of the proposal on the groups with protected characteristics, there is evidence to suggest that the students of Atkinson House Special School would be disproportionately advantaged simply by virtue of the premise of the proposal and its rationale set out at para. 2. Should a decision be made by the Council's Cabinet to take move to the formal statutory process, any evidence arising from the statutory consultation that suggests that there could be possible negative impacts, identified risks would be analysed to establish whether or not there were certain risks to any or all of those groups. Steps to reduce negative impacts or enhance positive impacts would then be defined.

## **PART 4 - Ongoing Monitoring**

42) What are your plans to monitor the actual impact of the implementation of the change, decision or proposal on equality of opportunity? (include action points and timescales)

This EIA has assessed in the light of feedback from the informal consultation period. Should the proposal be approved and the process move to the publication of a statutory proposal, the EIA would be further updated at the end of the statutory period. Appropriate action would be identified in the light of the consultation and where necessary, an action plan with timescales developed.

## **PART 5 - Authorisation**

Name of Head of Service and Date Approved

*Once completed, send your full EIA to: [Irene.Fisher@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:Irene.Fisher@northumberland.gov.uk). A summary will then be generated corporately and published to the Council's website.*

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## Northumberland County Council

Cabinet – 8<sup>th</sup> March 2022

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### **Climate Change Update**

Matt Baker, Service Director for Climate Change, Business Intelligence and Corporate Performance

**Report of Cabinet Member:** Cllr Glen Sanderson, Leader of the Council

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### **Purpose of report**

To provide an update on progress against the Climate Change Action Plan 2021-23, published in January 2021.

### **Recommendations**

1. Formalise the role of Climate Change Policy Group in the Council governance processes, with closer links to the Executive Team and Members, through quarterly reports on the impact of policy decisions on the Council's ability to deliver net zero.
2. Executive Directors and Cabinet Members should query reports, where the Carbon Impact Assessment has not been completed and it is expected to impact on the council's ability to deliver net zero, as part of the council's governance arrangements.
3. Executive Directors and Cabinet Members should complete carbon literacy training in 2022.
4. The online Climate Change module should be included in statutory and mandatory training for all staff.
5. The provision for targeted grant funding (Climate Change Community Fund £50,000 recurrent) for community climate change initiatives, that has been made in the upcoming Council budget, should be approved.
6. Continue running the Free Tree Scheme each year up to the 2030 net-zero target with the intention of offering a tree for every household in Northumberland.

### **Link to Corporate Plan**

An update on the work underway to support the delivery of the council's ambition for Northumberland to be a net zero county by 2030. A key component of the Corporate Plan.

### **Key Issues.**

1. The scale of resident and community partnerships is increasing, creating a fantastic opportunity to enable the behavioural changes needed to deliver net zero. This will require even more communication and engagement activities in 2022. Recent weather events have brought the significance of high value communications into even sharper focus.
2. The interdependencies with national and local policy decisions, including decarbonisation of the national grid, national planning standards, tariffs on synthetic fuels and incentives for low carbon solutions, especially for transport (active and public), power and heating.

3. The increased emphasis on in-house delivery will offer the opportunity for greater value for money and an improved resident experience. This will be an incremental change in nature of the Council's role and further increase the importance of cross service collaboration.
4. The nature of the District Heat Schemes service delivery model will be critical to ensure the schemes are viable and affordable for customers (domestic or commercial).
5. As the low carbon supply chain develops this will bring high quality jobs to the region, including low carbon manufacturing, the impact of positive and negative emissions from this supply chain needs to be accounted for.
6. As national and global commitments to Climate Change evolve, the scope of work considered as part of any comprehensive Climate Change programme will increase, for example to include: Adaptation, Methane, and Green Finance.
7. The information provided through BEIS on the progress being made to deliver net zero lags project activities by two years.
8. Ensuring funding is secured with realistic conditions (e.g. timescales for delivering grants), including work to get the most from all our devolution deals and partnership arrangements.

## 1. **Background**

This report will outline progress made against the *Climate Change Action Plan 2021-23* and will build upon the previous *Northumberland Climate Change Update* submitted in September 2021.

The Climate Change Action Plan identifies 7 priority action areas under which projects are delivered. Additionally, the Climate Change Action Plan considers the Council's own carbon footprint which we pledged to reduce by 50% by 2025 (from 2010 levels).

The Climate Change service is far reaching and is built upon cross-organisational collaboration with the shared ambition to deliver net zero by 2030. Integral to the delivery is a coalition of support from elected Members, resident and community groups, partner organisations and businesses across the county and beyond. The continued support of residents, colleagues and partners across these areas is essential to the continued success of the programme.

In the financial year 2021/22, the Climate Change service has been successful in attracting nearly £14,500,000 in funding for low-carbon schemes benefiting both our Council estate and our residents.

Project Name	Capital (£)	Revenue (£)	Total (£)
Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme 1	3,012,580		3,012,580
Green Homes Grant LAD1b	2,923,176		2,923,176
Green Homes Grant LAD2	2,214,042		2,214,042
Sustainable Warmth Competition (LAD3 & HUG)	5,626,407		5,626,407
Heat Network Delivery Unit (HNDU)		200,000	200,000
OZEV On Street Residential Chargepoint Scheme	96,620		96,620
Hexham Hydro Feasibility		100,000	100,000
Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund 2 Round 1	304,152		304,152
	<b>14,176,977</b>	<b>300,000</b>	<b>14,476,977</b>

In the full report that follows, a number of **recommendations** have been made. These recommendations will appear in a green box for ease of reference.

In the full report that follows, a number of **key points** have been made. These key points will appear in a purple box for ease of reference.

## **2. Key Priorities for 2022**

The key priorities for the Climate Change service in 2022 are:

### **Continue to work closely with our residents and communities.**

- Hold quarterly public engagement events, extend our community climate champion network, strengthen connections with our business community and engage residents through continuation of the annual Free Tree Scheme.
- Work closely with rural communities, to provide support to the farming community and to help deliver the Great Northumberland Forest as we look to expand upon the 500 ha being planted by 2025.

### **Lead the way nationally in delivering net zero through ‘electrification’ of transport and our estate.**

- Install at least 75 EV charge points every year for the next three years, continue to upgrade the Council fleet with the target to have 50% of eligible vehicles upgraded to EVs by 2025 and build a solar car port at County Hall.
- Work with the business community, including British Volt, to create a world class supply chain in Green Technology.
- Increasing the amount of renewable electricity we generate as a Council and undertaking a number of additional pilot projects.

### **Deliver schemes that help our residents to tackle Climate Change directly every day.**

- Roll out the Warmer Home programmes to more than 500 households to reduce carbon emissions, improve heating efficiency and resilience.
- Continue to pilot solutions for food waste, glass recycling and synthetic heating fuels.
- Complete the District Heat Scheme Feasibility Studies for Alnwick, Ashington, Berwick-upon-Tweed, Hexham and Morpeth as well as detailed feasibility studies in Blyth and Cramlington.

Alongside continuing high levels of community engagement a key focus in 2022, learning from the delivery experience of 2021, will be to take greater ownership for delivering schemes in-house, especially for schemes relating to sustainably heating homes and EV charge point installation.

## **3. Climate Change Action Plan Delivery**

More than 30 projects are either at initiation or delivery stage across the priority action areas. Plans for additional projects or pilots are also under development.

Monitoring the CO<sub>2</sub> impact of the projects delivered through the Climate Change service are dependent on data from BEIS, published two years in arrears. Work is underway with the Business Intelligence service to determine whether an in-house mechanism for monitoring CO<sub>2</sub> emissions could be developed, to provide access to a more up to date emissions trajectory.

Further information on the progress made, plans and recommendations for each of the Climate Change Action areas is provided below.

### **3.1. Policy**

#### **3.1.1. Climate Policy Group**

A dedicated Climate Change policy group has been established with Service Directors and Heads of Service from across all areas of the Council. The purpose of this group is to act as a central point for reviewing key policy and procurement decisions that could impact Climate Change. This forum is co-chaired by the Service Director, Climate Change and the Service Director, Policy.

##### ***Recommendation 1***

Formalise the role of Climate Change Policy Group in the Council governance processes, with closer links to the Executive Team and Members, through quarterly reports on the impact of policy decisions on the Council's ability to deliver net zero.

#### **3.1.2. Carbon Impact Assessments**

In the previous Climate Change Cabinet update, it was agreed that all decisions going to Cabinet should have a carbon impact assessment (CIA) attached. The CIA form is now available on the top tasks intranet homepage and has been agreed with service directors at the Climate Change policy group.

##### ***Recommendation 2***

Executive and Cabinet Members should query reports, where the Carbon Impact Assessment has not been completed and there is an impact on the council's ability to deliver net zero as part of the council's governance arrangements.

#### **3.1.3. Staff Training**

Monthly Carbon Literacy training sessions, built on training undertaken by the Climate Change service from the Carbon Trust, for Council employees have now been established. To date 83 staff Members have undertaken the training and are now classed as 'carbon literate'. We have also developed a carbon literacy toolkit on behalf of the Carbon Literacy Trust which is aimed at resident community groups.

In order to become a Bronze certified Carbon Literate organisation, senior leaders are required to undertake carbon literacy training.

##### ***Recommendation 3***

Executive Directors and Cabinet Members should complete carbon literacy training in 2022.

An online module introducing Climate Change in the Northumberland context has been developed and is available on Learning Together. A paper will be submitted to Workforce Committee on 4<sup>th</sup> February recommending its inclusion in statutory and mandatory training.

##### ***Recommendation 4***

The online Climate Change module should be included in statutory and mandatory training.

#### **3.1.4.Planning**

A process has been put in place to ensure the Climate Change service are a consulted party for all planning applications that could impact NCC's ability to deliver Net Zero by 2030.

#### **3.1.5.Future of Farming**

Given the rural nature of the county and the importance of the farming community to our rural economy, work is underway with the Economy & Regeneration team, Policy and the Climate Change service to deliver an evidenced based review of the future of farming, in partnership with Newcastle University.

### **3.2. Partnerships and Engagement**

#### **3.2.1.Community Climate Champions**

A second cohort of Community Climate Champions have been added to the pilot group meaning that there are now 25 locations in Northumberland which have a Community Climate Champion. These champions have received training to support them develop Climate Change action plans for their communities which align to the Council's county-wide Climate Change Action Plan. Community Climate Champions have, in nearly all cases, identified a need for small amounts of funding to help them get their plans off the ground. A fund has been identified in the Council's upcoming budget which would be distributed through the Community Chest scheme.

#### ***Recommendation 5***

The provision for targeted grant funding (Climate Change Community Fund £50,000 recurrent) for community climate change initiatives, that has been made in the upcoming Council budget, should be approved.

#### **3.2.2.Working Group and Steering Group**

The supporting role of the Climate Working Group and the Climate Change Steering Group with representation from across the county (residents, towns, urban areas, rural communities, business and the third sector) have been a key factor in the results achieved in the past 12 months.

#### **3.2.3.Town and Parish Councils**

A survey of all town and parish Councils has been conducted asking whether they had declared a climate emergency or had plans to address Climate Change. Of those who responded, the vast majority wanted to develop plans but identified a need for support. We are therefore in the process of developing a town and parish council Climate Change toolkit to support local climate action further. This toolkit could also be used by other community groups.

#### **3.2.4.Free Tree Scheme**

All 15,000 of this year's free trees have been allocated (5,691 to individual residents, 9,310 to groups). 2,200 have so far been handed out. Distribution was interrupted by Storm Arwen and rescheduled hand out events will take place in late February. Any trees not collected will be passed to the Great Northumberland Forest team for planting in Blyth and Cramlington as part of the Local Authority Treescape Fund.

#### ***Recommendation 6***

Continue running the Free Tree Scheme each year up to the 2030 net-zero target with the intention of offering a tree for every household in Northumberland.

The benefits of the Free Tree scheme reach far beyond the carbon sequestered by each tree. Nevertheless, given that the average tree absorbs 10kg of CO<sub>2</sub> per year for the first 20 years of its life, we can estimate a carbon saving of 350,000kg over the two years the scheme has been running. By continuing to hand out 15,000 saplings per year for 10 years, the Free Tree Scheme alone has the potential to sequester approximately 8,250,000kg of CO<sub>2</sub> between 2020-2030, a figure which will only increase in future years as the trees mature.

### **3.2.5.Live Events**

We have now held a four public webinars (three last year and one this January) and Q&As using Zoom. Each of these has been well attended with audiences of over 100. Across these events 295 questions were asked. We intend to continue holding live events on a quarterly basis and are currently analysing all 295 questions for emerging themes, which include: Green Finance, Active Transport and opportunities for Community Engagement. The answers to the most frequent questions will form the basis of future events and communication activities.

In addition to the online events, the Climate Change service have been asked to attend community led events across the county. These have ranged from Town and Parish Council meetings to stands at markets. Continuing to support these events demonstrates our commitment to community engagement.

### **3.2.6.Wider community engagement**

We have two major communication channels with the wider Northumberland community. 6270 residents are now signed up to the Climate Newsletter. This provides a monthly update on the climate-relevant schemes and events happening in Northumberland, as well as providing useful information and tips for individuals to take action on Climate Change.

The Climate inbox is also an extremely valuable point of communication that allows direct communication with the Climate Change service. On a weekly basis, we get between 20-25 new queries to the mailbox alongside ongoing communications. To reach our net zero targets we will need to engage with and work alongside many different actors and sectors across Northumberland. The Climate Mailbox is often the first point of contact for this work and is therefore crucially important in facilitating our wider aims.

### **3.2.7.Net Zero Investment Strategy**

Working with Advance, the Skills and Education service, Regeneration & Economy and Policy teams, the Climate Change service has created a Net Zero Investment Strategy. The Net-Zero Investment Strategy is the framework we will use to attract the investment and build the supply chain that the county needs to become net-zero, by 2030. The strategy focuses on the following areas:

- Natural Resources
- Generating, Supplying and Storing energy
- Changing the fabric of our homes and communities
- Moving around and through our county

Building on this strategy work is now underway with Newcastle University to complete further research and development activities into supply and demand for Synthetic Fuel and how this could enable rapid decarbonisation for:

- Complex rural issues (e.g. kerosene powered heating), where electric heat pumps may not be viable due to the fabric of older homes; and,
- Complex transport issues, where the cost of electrification is prohibitively high e.g. Heavy Goods Vehicles.

Three linked but separate projects will be started this year, the first looking at the demand side for heating, the second looking at the demand side for transport and the third looking at the supply side for all demand.

### **3.2.8.Future Projects**

We are working to develop further means of engaging key stakeholders. A Schools Engagement Strategy is under development with support from colleagues in Education. We are also developing a Business Engagement Strategy and hope to also be able to provide a toolkit for tourism providers this year.

## **3.3. Heating New and Existing Buildings**

### **3.3.1.Warmer Homes Projects**

The Council has successfully bid for a series of grants BEIS (Department of Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy). In total these grants are worth £10.8 million and will improve energy efficiency in more than 500 of the most vulnerable homes in Northumberland.

Although each grant has their own specific criteria, they are all focussed on a ‘fabric first’ approach towards improving the energy efficiency of homes, or a conversion to low carbon heating.

The grants are all aimed at helping those households most at risk of fuel poverty, and the coldest/least energy efficient homes first. For eligible households in Northumberland (eligibility is slightly different for each scheme, but in general applies to properties with household income of less than £30,000 and an EPC rating of E or below) a range of measures can be used like external wall insulation, loft insulation, Air Source Heat Pumps, and solar photovoltaic panels, depending on what is most suitable for each home.

These funds will help NCC bring Social Value benefits to stakeholders at all levels (households, communities, delivery partners, and the NCC itself) through the following social value priority policy themes, Fighting Climate Change, Tackling economic inequality, Wellbeing and Covid 19 recovery.

#### *Delivering Warmer Homes in 2022*

Rather than relying exclusively on the Private Sector, we intend to deliver future schemes including Green Homes Grants LAD2 and the Sustainable Warmth Fund through an in-house retrofit team.

This team will be line managed within the Housing Team, with strategic, business intelligence and project management support from the Climate Change service. Adverts are currently live. Posts are funded through the grant funding awarded. This will enable us to have far greater control on the quality and value for money we offer through these schemes. We will still however, be reliant on resilient supply chains being able to deliver the materials and technologies to be installed. This will require a robust and well-managed procurement process.

**Key Point 1**

Note intention to deliver warmer homes schemes in house requiring close collaboration between colleagues in Climate Change, Housing and Customer Services. A dedicated report on the progress of warmer homes projects will be presented at Communities and Place OSC on 8<sup>th</sup> April 2022.

**3.3.2. Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme**

The Climate Change service successfully secured two phases of funding to decarbonise heating at a range of NCC properties including leisure centres, schools and fire stations. Phase 1 will be complete by June 2022, with five sites having a ground source heat system installed that will reduce carbon emissions. Phase 1 had a total grant value of £3,012,580 for Willowburn leisure centre, Belford Fire Station, Swarland, Stamfordham, Stannington, and Alnwick Lindisfarne School. Phase 2 is in the process of being approved, with one bid for £148,210 waiting on a grant offer letter, and the second bid for £2,720,037 in the technical queries stage awaiting approval.

**3.3.3. District Heat Schemes**

Having completed heat mapping feasibility studies for low carbon district heat schemes in Blyth and Cramlington, we successfully applied for funding for the next stage – technoeconomic feasibility studies. These will be procured and delivered during 2022. Schemes identified as feasible will then be progressed to business cases and bids for capital delivery.

A key aspect of this work will involve determining the best service delivery model for these schemes, to ensure they are commercially viable and affordable. This work will be undertaken in partnership with the Climate Change service, NCC Procurement and the North East LEP, to utilise their technical expertise in this area and involve assessment of other local, national and international delivery models for this type of scheme.

**Key Point 2**

Note the significance of the work needed to develop and agree the optimal service delivery model for District Heating Schemes in the county. The options under consideration and the recommended option will require Executive team and Member sign off.

We have also received funding to undertake stage one heat mapping in Berwick-upon-Tweed, Alnwick, Morpeth, Ashington and Hexham. These have been procured and will be delivered in quarter 1 of the 2022/23 financial year. We will then progress any feasible schemes to technoeconomic stage.

**3.3.4. Building Net Zero Schools**

Work is underway, in partnership with the Education team, to support the build programme for new schools. The goal is to help facilitate the creation of new schools that can operate as 'net zero schools' and potentially as catalysts for district heating and / or community energy schemes.

**3.4. Transport****3.4.1. Electric Vehicle Charging**

We have continued to increase our electric vehicle charging provision across the county. This work takes place in collaboration with colleagues in Highways. A successful bid to the Office for Zero Emissions Vehicles (OZEV) has led to the installation of 30 new EV chargers targeted at residents who park on the street. This project is currently underway and all chargers will be commissioned and in service by the end of March.



Additionally, colleagues in Local Services have continued installing EV chargers in car parks, particularly where new car parks are being developed. This will lead to an additional 22 chargers serving up to 44 vehicles simultaneously by the end of 2021/22 financial year. This means that by the end of March we will operate over 100 chargers across the County making us one of the leading Local Authorities for EV charging.

#### *Delivering EV Chargers in 2022 and Beyond*

Going forward, it is intended that we significantly scale up our EV charging provision, focusing primarily on serving residents who park on-street and are therefore unable to install their own EV chargers at home. We will also continue installing chargers in key destinations and new car parks. A new bid to OZEV is being developed for 75 new on-street chargers in 2022/23. Further bids will follow on an annual basis.

To manage the quality of this work, these chargers will be installed and maintained by Council staff. This team will be line managed within the Highways team, with strategic, business intelligence and project management support from the Climate Change service.

#### **Key Point 3**

Note the intention to scale up EV charging provision through in-house delivery, funded through a combination of bids to the national OZEV scheme and NCC capital funding. The detail of the funding required will be specified in a standalone report and reviewed through the appropriate governance forums.

#### **3.4.2. Synthetic Fuels**

Hydrogenated Vegetable Oil (HVO) is a synthetic fuel which can be used as a substitute both for diesel in vehicles and for kerosene in heating. Burning HVO emits 90% less CO<sub>2</sub> than its fossil fuel equivalents.

This presents an opportunity to rapidly decarbonise our larger fleet vehicles, from 3.5 tonne tippers up to HGVs, where there are no economically or operationally viable electric alternatives currently available. Work is currently being undertaken to identify any issues or constraints regarding the implications of using HVO on manufacturers warranties on vehicles/engines etc.

This information is being used to help inform the development of a ~12 month pilot scheme for the use of HVO within some of the fleet vehicles at one of the depots, which will seek to assess the financial, operational and environmental performance of HVO. If successful, its use could then be quickly rolled out to our entire large vehicle fleet. This project will be delivered jointly by the Fleet team and the Climate Change service.

#### **Key Point 4**

Note intention to develop the business case for piloting HVO in Council owned large fleet vehicles where no viable electric alternatives are currently available. The detail of any funding required for this pilot will be specified in a standalone report and reviewed through the appropriate governance forums.

### **3.4.3. Fleet Replacement**

Decarbonisation of our small van fleet has continued. 56 of our small vans have now been replaced with electric alternatives. Charging facilities have been installed in respective depots. Replacement of petrol-powered handheld equipment with battery alternatives is also continuing.

By 2025, assuming affordability assumptions remain stable and subject to availability of vehicles / robustness of the supply chain, 198 petrol or diesel vehicles in the NCC fleet will be replaced with electric alternatives. This will mean 50% of the eligible vehicles will be electric in the Council's fleet by 2025.

### **3.4.4. Active transport**

There are twelve Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs) entering consultation in February 2022, this is later than expected.

Following the assessment of the consultation feedback these plans will be further developed. The Levelling Up Fund may be able to support the capital infrastructure cost, the next application window is due to open in summer 22.

#### **Key Point 5**

Note progress with LCWIPs, assist in the communication of open consultations and support future developments, including closing links between the Climate Change service and the Active Transport team.

### **3.4.5. Other Projects**

Several other key projects including the Northumberland Line and Blyth-Bebside cycle corridor are also continuing, led by colleagues in Economy and Regeneration. These will also contribute to reduced carbon emissions. The Climate Change team is also supporting the Transport team with mandatory carbon assessments of the Blyth Relief Road project and in discussions about the opportunity to decarbonise the school transport system.

## **3.5. Renewable Energy**

### **3.5.1. Solar Car Port**

The County Hall solar car port which will harvest energy from the sun through solar panels suspended above the County Hall car park, has encountered some delays over the past year. The issues have now been resolved and it is anticipated that the design, install and commissioning process will be completed within the 2022/23 financial year. The car port will also include 120 EV chargers for staff working at County Hall. Once complete this project will provide a blueprint for the sustainable use of further car parks, both private car parks within NCC's own estate and public car parks.

This project will be delivered jointly by the Climate Change service and Estates team.

### **3.5.2. Hexham Hydroelectricity Plant**

A detailed feasibility study is being prepared into the possibility of hydroelectricity generation on the Tyne River at Hexham. The project has developed initial designs which are currently going through consultation with both Planning Authority and the Environment Agency. A proposal on how to take this forward from the Environment Agency is expected in February 2022 and subject to a mutually agreeable approach the feasibility should conclude in Summer 2022. If the scheme is identified to be

feasible, a business case to fund construction will be presented to Cabinet via the Council's capital strategy governance route.

**Key Point 6**

Note, subject to the findings of the feasibility study and consultation, the intention to develop the business case for the Hexham Hydroelectric scheme.

**3.5.3. Solar PV at Scale**

The Climate Change service will be assessing the Council estate across the next three months to identify assets where solar PV can be installed to increase our renewable energy generation capacity and lower our carbon footprint. These will primarily be buildings but may also include car parks and historic landfill sites. Where projects are feasible, business cases will be created for consideration at Capital Strategy Group.

**Key Point 7**

Note intention to develop further business cases for installation of solar PV across Council estate, which will be specified in a standalone report and reviewed through the appropriate governance forums.

**3.6. Carbon Sequestration**

**3.6.1. Great Northumberland Forest**

The Great Northumberland Forest programme formally launched in autumn 2021. In reality, work has been taking place in support of this initiative since 2019. Land is identified for tree planting either at a large scale (woodland creation) or a small scale (hedgerows or individual trees). By the end of March 2022, 1,587 hectares of woodland will have been created and 321,893 further trees will have been planted since 2019. This means that in total, by the end of March 2022, nearly 3 million new trees will have been planted supporting the delivery of the Great Northumberland Forest initiative.

This project will be delivered jointly by the Climate Change service and the Great Northumberland Forest team.

**3.6.2. Forest / Woodland management**

Work is underway to develop a business case for a Woodland management team. This work is being completed jointly by the Climate Change service and the Great Northumberland Forest team.

**Key Point 8**

Note intention to develop a business case for creating a Woodland management team, which will be specified in a standalone report and reviewed through the appropriate governance forums.

**3.6.3. Northumberland Peat Partnership**

Peat has an important role to play in absorbing carbon dioxide. Restoring peatlands across the county will be a priority of the next Climate Change Action Plan as it delivers real-time carbon benefits. The Climate Change service is now represented on the Northumberland Peat Partnership alongside Ecology. In autumn 2021, the Peat Partnership was successful in being awarded £779,000 in revenue funding. This will largely fund project management positions to oversee conditional surveys and restoration projects for Northumberland's peatlands.

This project will be delivered jointly by the Climate Change service and the in-house team of Ecologists, working with our external Peat Partners, including both National Parks.

#### **3.6.4. Biodiversity Net-Gain**

The Climate Change Team will work closely with colleagues in planning to support the policy of biodiversity net-gain. Alongside this the projects above, whilst associated primarily with Carbon Sequestration, will improve biodiversity as a secondary objective.

### **3.7. Waste**

#### **3.7.1. Glass Recycling Pilot**

The kerbside glass recycling pilot scheme has been running since November 2020 providing a once monthly collection of glass from around 4,000 households. Data from the period November 2020 to September 2021 shows that the trial scheme has been well received by participants with high satisfaction levels, requests for retention of the service and high yields of glass per household.

The costs of implementing the pilot scheme are as planned, with capital costs for purchase of bins being £63,000 and revenue costs for undertaking the collections and delivering on-going communications activity at £43,000.

The 301.3 tonnes of glass expected to be collected during the 12-month trial provides a positive contribution to tackling Climate Change, even after taking into account the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from the collection and transportation of the recovered glass, with the trial delivering an overall net saving of 98 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e as of November 2021.

Going forward this data will be reviewed monthly to calculate carbon savings to report within the climate performance team.

#### **3.7.2. Food Waste Pilot**

A key element of delivering net zero in the county by 2030 is helping residents to understand the waste hierarchy and provide solutions for their waste. The Environment Act, recently passed into law, will mandate the separate collection of recycling waste streams for all English Local Authorities, one such being food waste.

We have been working with Waste Services to develop a proposal for a food waste pilot which will focus initially on the cost, performance and impact on residual waste that separate collections will have.

Using modelling provided by WRAP (<https://wrap.org.uk/about-us>), we can assume an average yield of 1.3 kg food waste per household per week, a pilot across 4288 properties will generate a yield of around 5.5 tonnes per week. This creates the opportunity to reduce carbon emissions by an estimated 12,220 kg CO<sub>2</sub>e per year through diverting from Energy from Waste to Anaerobic Digestion, as well as increasing resident awareness of food waste and the impact that reduction can have both on the environment and on their household bills. This project would be delivered jointly by the Climate Change service and the Waste Services team.

#### **Key Point 9**

Note the intention to deliver a food waste pilot for the county, which will be specified in a standalone report and reviewed through the appropriate governance forums.

### **3.7.3. Repair Hubs**

Working in partnership with the Communities Together Team, work is underway to identify sites and trades that could be part of Repair Hubs to help extend the life of everyday items for our residents.

### **3.8. Northumberland County Council Carbon Footprint**

Analysis and evidence shows that NCC's organisational emissions have been dropping over the last 10 years of reporting and have now reached a 50.1% reduction against our 2009/10 baseline. It should be noted however that a significant drop in 2020/21 occurred due to reduced business mileage as a result of lockdowns. The Council's carbon footprint is now being measured biannually and reported through the corporate performance system.

Having met the Council's 50% reduction in operational emissions four years early, the Climate Change service is now developing a pathway to net zero for the organisation.

The strategy will support the key action areas developed in the 2021-23 action plan and will prioritise the decarbonisation of heat, transport and electricity across the estate. Net-zero for our operations will require the adoption of a methodology change to consider sequestration from Council owned and managed woodlands.

Since 2019 NCC has operated a travel salary sacrifice scheme, marketing primarily foreign holidays to staff. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic the scheme has been on hold since March 2020. Alternate low carbon schemes will be considered as part of the route to net zero for Council owned options, this could include access to low carbon heating, power and storage solutions for staff.

The proposal may also include analysis and proposals of the impact of green finance on our credentials as a low carbon Council.

It is expected that the Net-Zero plan for Council owned emissions will be available for consideration by Cabinet on or before June 22.

#### **Key Point 10**

Note the intention to develop plans to make the Council a carbon neutral organisation by 2030, which may also include proposals to change the salary sacrifice scheme.

### **3.9. Climate Change Action Plan 23-25**

Work will be completed throughout 2022 to develop the Climate Change Action Plan for the 23-25. This will extend on the previous action plan and consider changes local, national and international knowledge and priorities. With the scope likely to include: Adaptation, Methane, and Green Finance.

It may also include Biodiversity, but given the scope and complexity of this area it is more likely that this will be the subject of a separate strategy and action plan and will require additional resources to complete.

#### **Key Point 11**

Note the intention to develop the next version of the Climate Action Plan, for 23-25, with a draft report being available for Executive Team and Member review in Autumn 2022.

## **Implications**

Policy	Proposes Council policies should be aligned to mitigate Climate Change and support carbon reduction.
Finance and value for money	There are no direct financial implications associated with this report Notes that Climate Change work will be subject to corporate performance reporting in order to monitor success including value for money.
Legal	The Climate Change Act 2008 establishes a legally binding target to reduce the UK's greenhouse gas emissions by at least 80% in 2050 from 1990 levels.
Procurement	Refers to corporate social responsibility procurement policy.
Human Resources	Training of staff in carbon literacy.
Property	Projects for low-carbon heating and solar on NCC property
Equalities (Impact Assessment attached) Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No x N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	Where possible projects and programmes will assist residents in fuel poverty and try to bring about fairer and more equal access to more affordable energy.
Risk Assessment	See corporate risk register
Crime & Disorder	N/A
Customer Consideration	Residents can expect the Council to lead a move to a net zero target by 2030. The Council will work to involve all residents and businesses in this process.
Carbon reduction	Adopting recommendations in this paper will either directly or indirectly lead to significant carbon savings.
Wards	All

Background papers:

Climate Change Action Plan 2021-23  
Northumberland Climate Change Update September 2021  
Report sign off.

Authors must ensure that relevant officers and Members have agreed the content of the report:

	Full name of officer
Monitoring Officer/Legal	Suki Binjal
Finance	Jan Willis
Relevant Executive Director	Rick O'Farrell
Portfolio Holder(s)	Glen Sanderson

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## CABINET

DATE: 8 MARCH 2022

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### Household Support Fund Update

**Report of** Maureen Taylor Interim Executive Director Communities and Business Development

**Cabinet Member:** Cllr Richard Wearmouth, Corporate Resources  
Cllr Wendy Pattison, Adult Well-being

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#### **Purpose of report**

To provide members with an update of Northumberland County Council's progress for delivery of the DWP Household Support Fund (HSF) for the period 06<sup>th</sup> October 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022.

#### **Recommendations**

- To note the content of the report and the DWP initial Management Information return for 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021
- To help promote awareness of the Households Support Fund with those residents who may need support and assistance.

#### **Link to Corporate Plan**

This report is relevant to Thriving, Living, Learning and Connecting priorities in the NCC Corporate Plan 2018- 2022

#### **Background**

On 30 September 2021 the Government announced that a new Household Support Fund (HSF) grant will be made available to County Councils and Unitary Authorities in England to support those most in need this winter. This new grant will run from 06 October 2021 to 31 March 2022 and totals £500m. **Northumberland County Council indicative funding allocation is £2,480,330.00.**

Local Authorities are encouraged to use the wide range of data and sources of information at their disposal to identify and provide support to a broad cross section of vulnerable households in their area. As **support is not restricted to vulnerable households in receipt of benefits**, Local Authorities are encouraged to identify vulnerable households through advice and support from other professionals and Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector partners.

### **Reporting requirements**

Authorities are required to make two Statements of Grant Usage and management information (MI) returns.

MI return	Reporting period		Deadline
Interim MI return	From: 06 October 2021	To: 31 December 2021	Deadline: 21 January 2022
Final MI return	From: 06 October 2021	To: 31 March 2022	Deadline: 22 April 2022

An interim MI return was required by 21 January 2022 for spend for the period 06 October 2021 to 31 December 2021. The interim MI return will be used to determine eligible spend to 31 December 2021 and an interim grant payment will be made to the Local Authority for this period once the information in the return has been verified.

### **Interim MI Return Summary:**

- Total Expenditure as of 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021: **£780,623.79**
- Committed Expenditure as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021: **£1,645,048.77**
- Remaining Available Fund for period 01/01/2022 - 31/03/2022: **£835,281.23**
- Total planned expenditure for period 06/11/21 – 31/03/2022 **£2,480,330.00**

The table below shows the Interim MI Return as of 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021 for all receipted expenditure.

Table 1: Initial MI Return for period 06/11/21-31/12/21

Total Awards	
Item	Spend (£s)
a) Total amount provided to vulnerable households	£777,378.79
b) Administration Costs	£3245
c) Total LA spend (a+b)	<b>£780,623.79</b>

Total Value of Awards split by Household Composition			
	a) Households with Children	b) Households without Children	c) Total (a+b)
Spend (£s)	£700,398.47	£76,980.32	£777,378.79
Volumes	19097	1830	20927

Total Value of Awards Split by Category						
	a) Food	b) Energy and Water	c) Essentials linked to	d) Wider Essentials	e) Housing Costs	e) Total (a+b+c+d+e)

			Energy and Water			
Spend (£s)	£571,912.44	£180,190.29	£12,635.47	£12,640.59	£0.00	£777,378.79

## Delivery Plan

The MI return does not capture committed expenditure for weeks 50, 51 and 52 where receipts have not yet been processed for payments. This includes funding for Christmas/New Year 2021 School Holiday period. Expenditure is performing against delivery plan, and we have a high confidence in fully exhausting the fund by 31/03/2022.

Deliberate action has been taken not to exhaust the fund in the first half of the reporting period due to other financial support available in the period such as:

- DFE Holiday Activity & Food programme (HAF),
- DHSC Practical Support Payment (PSP);
- Northumberland CAB Fuel support pathway
- DHSC Test & Trace Self-Isolation payments.

There will be an anticipated increase in referrals for support through HSF over the coming period, as the impact of both increasing fuel and utility bills and the reductions in universal credit payments start to take hold within households.

The period 01/01/2022 to 31/03/2022 will see an increase in both targeted support and universal referral aimed at vulnerable households with and without children with a particular focus on:

- supporting Free School Meals during the non-term times February 2022 and Easter 2022.
- vulnerable residents experiencing fuel stress and hardship due to high fuel and/or energy costs
- households experiencing food poverty or insecurities

DWP has allowed flexibility within the scheme to identify which vulnerable households are in most need of support and allows Northumberland County Council to apply their own discretion when identifying eligibility. The list above is not exhaustive.

Widespread communication is planned through NCC and NCT channels to ensure maximum awareness and to promote the fund.

Access to the fund will be facilitated by NCT via telephone during the following times (with the exception of bank holidays):

- Monday to Friday – 9:00am to 18:00pm

Northumberland Communities Together Tel: 01670 620015

Email: [NCT@Northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:NCT@Northumberland.gov.uk)

- Out of Hours & Weekends

Out of hours and weekends are handled by NCC OneCall emergency duty system.  
An out of hours voicemail service is also available including directing callers to other potential avenues of support. Tel: 01670 536400

Table 2: Progress against draft delivery plan.

Area of Funding	Planned Activities	Total		
		Anticipated spend (£s)	Actual	Committed as of 31/01/21
Support for Food of which is supporting Households without children 0-19yrs...	Continue to support food poverty and insecurities across communities. Direct food provision, emergency food provision, Pay point Payments, Shopping Vouchers sustainable community food offers	£700,000	£71,012	£350,000 (£421,012)
Support for food of which is supporting children eligible for Free School Meals during holidays	Support for families through shopping vouchers, Pay Point Payments, direction to Holiday Activity & Food (HAF) programme where eligible	£820,330	£450,900.44	£288,800.98 (£739,701.42)
Support for food of which is supporting children not currently eligible for FSMs (£s)	Emergency welfare support and assistance to needs and support for universally funded Holiday Activity & Food Programmes	£100,000	£50,000	(£50,000)
Support for Energy and Water.	Continue to support the Northumberland Fuel partnership and Warmer Homes partnership to address fuel poverty and insecurities through offer of Fuel Payment Vouchers, Pay Point Payments, and other discretionary support offers such as Greener Homes Grants. Targeted provision to vulnerable households living in cold homes, experiencing fuel poverty.	£240,000	£180,190.29	£150,000 (£330,190.29)
Support for Essentials linked to Energy and Water.	Support to households experiencing emergency with heating, electrical appliances such as cookers, boilers etc or other equipment essential for cooking, heating . Payment via Pay Point or through VCS organisations supporting provision of refurbished/recyclable goods	£120,000	£12,635.47	£40,000 (£52,635.47)
Support for Wider Essentials (Please specify in planned activities).	Support to households for emergency assistance with warm winter items, cooking utensils, bedding and other essentials - targeted provision for those experiencing homelessness, or experiencing transition due to domestic abuse, leaving prison, care etc and are deemed eligible and vulnerable and have no other means of support. Support to those households who meet HSF scheme eligibility but have no recourse to public funds	£100,000	£12,640.59	£30,000 (£42,640.59)
Support for housing costs (Please specify in planned activities).	Support with housing costs associated with connectivity bills to ensure individuals keep connected addressing social isolation; can process online transactions such as food deliveries, medical appointments, prescriptions, etc. Scheme allows discretion for other emergency housing bills, call out cost's plumber, electrician etc if aligns to scheme criteria.	£40,000	£0.00	£5,624 (£5,624)
Other spend (Please specify in planned activities).	Support with the delivery of prescriptions or other deliveries to help maintain households during periods of practical hardship or isolation. Continue to support the Northumberland Clothing Partnership to help provide and distribute clotting essentials to families in need of support and assistance.	£40,000	£0.00	(£0.00)
Scheme Administration.	Administration Charges for Pay Point transactions, Voucher Schemes etc. There is no provision for staff	£20,000	£3245	(£3245)

	costs Northumberland waives the right to ensure maximum allocations goes to households in need.			
Overall as of 31/012/2021.		£2,180,330.00	£780,623.79	£864,424.98 (£1,645,048.77)

## Implications

<b>Policy</b>	This is a government initiative providing support to all Local Authorities for the period to 31 March 2022
<b>Finance and value for money</b>	The draft delivery plan outlines the indicative areas of spend as per the criteria in the national guidance. The Council is required to submit monthly returns to the Department on spend.  Funding is paid to the Council in arrears
<b>Legal</b>	There is no requirement for Authorities to undertake a means test or conduct a benefit check unless this specifically forms part of the Authority's local eligibility criteria
<b>Procurement</b>	Not Applicable this a grant allocation under section 13 of the Local government Act 2003
<b>Human Resources</b>	NCT staffing resources will administer the grant. A small allowance can be ring fenced from the Fund should that be necessary. This is not expected.
<b>Property</b>	Not applicable
<b>Equalities</b> (Impact Assessment attached)  Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	Rather than focus on one specific vulnerable group, Authorities are encouraged to use the wide range of data and sources of information at their disposal to identify and provide support to a broad cross section of vulnerable households in their area. Authorities have the ability to deliver the scheme through a variety of routes including providing vouchers to households, making direct provision of food, or issuing grants to third parties (with the exception of debt advice provision). Authorities have the local ties and knowledge, making them best placed to identify and help those most in need and ensure an inclusive and equitable offer.
<b>Risk Assessment</b>	Not applicable
<b>Crime &amp; Disorder</b>	Potential positive impact on crime and disorder prevention when vulnerable residents feel supported
<b>Customer Consideration</b>	Open access to the Fund will encourage dialogue and provide support from this Fund. Where that is not appropriate, NCT will maximise its networks to find solutions to meet the needs of our

	vulnerable residents. Customer satisfaction is expected to be good.
<b>Carbon reduction</b>	Not directly applicable. Funding to support fuel insecurities will lead to conversations with residents about green energy supplies
<b>Health and Wellbeing</b>	Supporting vulnerable people to maintain their health and wellbeing over the winter period by providing targeted and personalised support
<b>Wards</b>	All

### **Report sign off.**

***Authors must ensure that officers and members have agreed the content of the report:***

	Full Name of Officer
Monitoring Officer/Legal	Suki Binjal
Executive Director of Finance & S151 Officer	Jan Willis
Relevant Executive Director	Maureen Taylor
Chief Executive	Daljit Lally
Portfolio Holder(s)	Cllr Richard Wearmouth Cllr Wendy Pattison

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CABINET

DATE: 8 MARCH 2022

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## DEVELOPMENT OF THE POTLAND BURN BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN SITE AND APPROVAL OF CAPITAL AND REVENUE EXPENDITURE

**Report of Interim Executive Director of Planning and Local Services**

**Cabinet Member:** Cllr Horncastle, Portfolio Holder for Community Services

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### **Purpose of report**

To seek approval for the capital and revenue expenditure that will be incurred in the development of the first phase of the Potland Burn biodiversity net gain site and which is fully funded by a S.106 contribution by Britishvolt, and for the capital and revenue budgets to be amended. To set out the likely need for further habitat creation at this site to meet the biodiversity net gain requirements for future strategic scale inward investment.

### **Recommendations**

#### **To approve**

1. The creation of an earmarked reserve using the developer contributions in order to fund the scheme over the lifetime of the reserve
2. The creation of a capital expenditure budget of £450,000 (as profiled below) which will be funded from the reserve as a revenue contribution to capital
3. The creation of a revenue expenditure budget of £1,688,400 (including the revenue contribution to fund the capital expenditure) as set out in paragraphs 4 to 6 below, all of which will be externally funded using the developer contributions.
4. The addition of the capital element of expenditure to the capital programme and the amendment to the revenue budget as per the profile in paragraph 7.
5. The use of the Potland Burn site in meeting future biodiversity net gain requirements for strategic employment sites.

### **Link to Corporate Plan**

The development of the site at Potland Burn for biodiversity net gain will support the following aspects of the corporate plan:

Thriving: We want to attract more and better jobs



The introduction of a requirement for biodiversity net gain currently as a policy requirement but shortly as a national mandatory condition of obtaining planning permission. This requires that the Council to take action to ensure that land will be available for habitat creation, to meet net gain requirements for inward investment schemes and other developments of importance to the Council's economic strategy. Failure to do so will place Northumberland at a competitive and comparative disadvantage compared to other areas where net gain land has been made available. Due to its size, the nature of the land and its location in south-east Northumberland, the Potland Burn site is both well suited and critical to this requirement.

Living: We want you to feel safe, healthy and cared for and Enjoying: We want you to love where you live

While some of the habitats to be created at Potland Burn will not be suitable for public access due to disturbance issues, extensive areas will be suitable for access through an enhanced footpath/cycling network. This will provide further green space on the edge of Ashington, alongside Ashington Community Woodland.

### **Key issues**

1. The Britishvolt planning application was the highest financial value application determined by the County Council since LGR. It presented a number of challenges due to the scale of the development. From an ecological perspective, over the time that the coal stocking yard was unused it developed a range of valuable ecological features. Furthermore, as a planning application that fell to be determined under the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations there was a particular need to be able to demonstrate that ecological issues had been addressed thoroughly and transparently. For these reasons it was agreed with Britishvolt that they would need to develop a scheme that demonstrated a biodiversity net gain of at least 10% based on the metric published by Defra for this purpose.
2. The main challenge arising from this specific requirement was to identify land suitable for habitat creation that was reasonably close to Cambois and available for this purpose, a challenge that was magnified by the speed at which Britishvolt needed to secure planning permission. Fortunately, the Potland Burn site met all of those requirements. There is no realistic prospect of development on most of the former surface mine and, being in the early stages of aftercare following restoration from surface mining primarily to agriculture it is essentially a blank canvas, comprising fields sown to a temporary grass ley. This means that appropriate habitat creation can secure a significant uplift in ecological value, giving it a high value per hectare for net gain purposes. This approach also removes the need for extensive and engineered under drainage to be installed at the site, which was a requirement of the planning conditions attached to the original opencast permission. The estimated value of the works outstanding in 2020 was approximately £400,000.
3. Because the Potland Burn site is in the ownership of Advance Northumberland, it is a party to the S.106 Agreement as well as Britishvolt and Northumberland County Council. The Agreement obliges Advance Northumberland to allow the Council to manage this area of land for the purpose of habitat creation and management for biodiversity net gain. Accordingly, the Agreement ensures that the scheme can proceed as set out in this report irrespective of whether the land remains in the

ownership of Advance Northumberland or is transferred to Northumberland County Council.

4. The metric-based calculations shows that an area of 67ha is required for habitat creation at Potland Burn to secure the necessary 10% biodiversity net gain for the Britishvolt scheme. This work will be managed by specialists within Northumberland County Council's Environment and Design Team with funding from Britishvolt. The level of funding contribution has been calculated using guidance contained in the Government's economic impact assessment of the Environment Bill and the experience of LPAs that have adopted net gain already, and on this basis the Section 106 Agreement for the planning permission commits Britishvolt to make a contribution of £1,688,400 to the Council for habitat creation at Potland Burn and its subsequent management for a period of at least 30 years. This is to be paid in two equal instalments; the first prior to commencement of development and the second within two years of the first payment. The first payment is expected to be received during the first quarter in 2022/23.
5. Capital expenditure will be incurred primarily during the first few years of the scheme as the new habitats are created and is likely to be in the region of £450,000. This will be for the excavation of an extensive network of ponds and wet scrapes; the sowing of wildflower mixes and the collection, growing on and planting of plug plants of scarce species growing on a site adjacent to this one; the planting of trees and scrub, access improvements and construction of a small livestock shed and handling facilities. It is difficult to profile this expenditure precisely at this point as an Officer needs to be recruited to take the project forward, soil nutrient testing undertaken to refine the habitat creation measures required and a work schedule drawn up that takes account of the various restrictions on the site. These mean that most of the larger scale work will need to be undertaken in late summer and autumn; after the bird breeding season and before the soil becomes too wet in winter.
6. Revenue funding will comprise officer time which will be 1.0fte initially estimated to be for three years during establishment. The budget will be reviewed once the capital element of works is completed but it is hoped future developments will contribute to further work at Potland Burn including this officer post, as well as ongoing management of habitats and maintenance of site fabric for a period of at least 30 years. Subject to changes in funding levels, any associated redundancy costs will be met from contributions received to date. It is proposed to create an earmarked reserve from contributions received and use it to fund the revenue and capital costs over the lifetime of the project.

7. The estimated profile of spending over financial years is shown below:

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025 - 2052	Total
	£	£	£	£	£
Capital Expenditure	200,000	200,000	50,000	0	450,000
Revenue Expenditure					
Staffing	38,540	40,690	42,870	382,360	504,460
Running costs of site	20,000	20,000	20,000	673,940	733,940
Revenue contribution to Capital	200,000	200,000	50,000	0	450,000
<b>Total Revenue*</b>	<b>258,540</b>	<b>260,690</b>	<b>112,870</b>	<b>1,056,300</b>	<b>1,688,400</b>

\*Funded from the S106 Contribution

8. Now that the Environment Bill has been enacted and biodiversity net gain is to become mandatory, it is also important to consider the nature and extent of habitat creation that is likely to be required to ensure that the requisite net gain can be achieved as key strategic employment sites such as NEP 2, Ashwood and West Hartford are developed. Failure to do so at this stage will mean that these matters would then have to be addressed on a case-by-case basis once an investor was actively engaging in a site selection process. This would add risk by creating uncertainty, delay and additional cost that would reduce the attractiveness of the Council's key inward investment sites. This is especially important as it is anticipated that the Britishvolt development will attract significant supply chain companies which will be looking for sites in north-east England. These requirements can be roughly estimated based on the vegetation communities present on the sites, although exact requirements will depend on the land take of any particular development and the potential for meaningful habitat creation on the development site itself.
9. A further 35ha will be available within the parcel of land already identified for use for biodiversity net gain at Potland Burn, and this could accommodate about 30% of the potential requirement arising from strategic employment sites in south-east Northumberland. There is a further 50ha of land within the former surface mine site on the western side of Longhirst Lane, excluding areas identified as having development potential in the medium to long term. If this was to be made available for habitat creation for net gain purposes it could accommodate about 50% of the potential future requirement arising from the development of strategic employment sites. Discussions are ongoing with the Council's Strategic Estates Team to identify further sites. As with Britishvolt, all of this work would be fully funded by developers and secured through S.106 Agreements.

## **Background**

1. The Britishvolt planning application was the first time that the Planning Service used Defra's recently developed biodiversity net gain metric to quantify ecological impacts and ensure that enhancement was provided sufficient to demonstrate a 10% net gain in ecological value overall. However, the Environment Act received the Royal Assent in November 2021 and it introduces a mandatory requirement for most types of planning application to demonstrate a net gain of at least 10%, which will come into effect in autumn 2023.
2. Where the land being developed is of low ecological value and there is space within the development for some habitat creation, it will be possible to satisfy that requirement on site through appropriate landscaping. However, where more important habitats will be impacted and space for habitat creation on site is limited, habitat creation off-site will be required. A recently published Market Analysis Study commissioned by Defra estimates that about 50% of new habitat will be delivered off site when net gain becomes mandatory.
3. While there is no requirement for local authorities to be proactive in helping developers to meet their net gain requirements, it will inevitably become an important aspect of developers' site selection processes, given the costs, additional work and potential delays involved. Accordingly ensuring that there is land available to meet net gain requirements for strategic employment sites will secure a significant advantage as developers consider the potential sites available to them, while failure to do so may make sites elsewhere more attractive to developers. Accordingly, this now needs to be an important aspect of the Council's approach to securing inward investment and meeting its economic regeneration aspirations.
4. The Environment Act requires that habitats created to meet net gain requirements are managed to keep them in their intended state for a period of at least 30 years. To assist developers and local planning authorities in the costing of such work Defra has commissioned research and provided guidance, firstly in the [Impact Assessment](#) published with the Environment Bill in 2019 and more recently in a [Market Analysis Study](#) published with the consultation on biodiversity net gain regulations and implementation that opened in January 2022. The Environment Bill Impact Assessment together with experience from local authorities that have pioneered the use of offsetting and net gain approaches were used to calculate Britishvolt's financial contribution for the work at Potland Burn. The more recently published Market Analysis Study supports the figures used.

## **Implications**

<b>Policy</b>	By facilitating inward investment the development of Potland Burn as a strategic net gain site will strongly support the Council's economic strategy. It also accords with the draft Northumberland Local Plan, in that it will ensure that net gain is secured at a site that is located in an ecologically appropriate area, being within the South East Northumberland Wildlife Network and Northumberland Coalfield Nature Improvement Area. Importantly it is also of a large enough scale to secure meaningful ecological benefits. Therefore it will help to deliver important employment-generating schemes by ensuring that they accord with policies ENV1 and ENV 2 of the Plan.
<b>Finance and value for money</b>	All of the work set out in this report is funded completely by developer contributions, and so there will be no cost to the Council.
<b>Legal</b>	<p>The Council, Advance Northumberland and Britishvolt are signatories to a S.106 Agreement, part of which governs the creation and management of new habitats on 67ha of land at Potland Burn by the Council, funded by Britishvolt.</p> <p>The recommendations relate to an executive function with the meaning of S.9D(2) Local Government Act 2000 as the expenditure is not an exception specified in regulations made under subsection 3 of that Act.</p>
<b>Procurement</b>	All work to be commissioned will be subject to the Council's procurement rules.
<b>Human Resources</b>	An Officer will be recruited to the Environment and Design Team in Planning Services to lead this work. A job description and person specification has been through evaluation and Human Resources has provided a job description number.
<b>Property</b>	The site will be managed by specialists within the Environment and Design Team in the Planning Service in the same way as the Cambois Wader Mitigation Site is currently managed.
<b>Equalities</b> (Impact Assessment attached)  Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	n/a
<b>Risk Assessment</b>	The Britishvolt funding for habitat creation and management has been secured by a legal agreement and will fully cover the costs

	involved, and so it is considered that this falls below the threshold for which a formal risk assessment is required.
<b>Crime Disorder &amp;</b>	n/a
<b>Customer Consideration</b>	The use of a biodiversity net gain approach to resolving ecological impacts at the development site enabled Britishvolt to secure planning permission within its required timescale.
<b>Carbon reduction</b>	The extensively managed wetland, grassland and scrub habitats to be created at Potland Burn all play a significant role in carbon sequestration, helping to meet the Council's carbon reduction targets.
<b>Health and Wellbeing</b>	While some of the areas will be sensitive to disturbance and so not suitable for public access, other areas will be capable of sustaining a level of managed access and so will provide an important greenspace resource.
<b>Wards</b>	Bothal, Pegswood

### **Background papers:**

S.106 Agreement for 21/00818/FULES Construction of battery factory at Cambois coal stocking yard

### **Report sign off.**

***Authors must ensure that officers and members have agreed the content of the report:***

	Full Name of Officer
Monitoring Officer/Legal	Suki Binjal
Deputy Section 151 Officer	Alison Elsdon
Relevant Executive Director	Rob Murfin
Chief Executive	Daljit Lally
Portfolio Holder(s)	Cllr C Horncastle
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## Northumberland County Council

### CABINET

**DATE: 8<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2022**

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### **MAKING THE LONGFRAMLINGTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

Report of the Chief Executive

Cabinet Member: Councillor Colin Horncastle, Community Services

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#### **Purpose of report**

To seek approval to formally 'make' the Longframlington Neighbourhood Plan. The Plan passed independent examination in October 2021. A local referendum held in the Parish of Longframlington on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2022 returned a majority vote in favour of using the Plan to make decisions on planning applications. The Council is now obliged by statute to make the Neighbourhood Plan unless it considers that doing so would breach European Union obligations.

#### **Recommendations**

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- i. Notes the referendum outcome of 20<sup>th</sup> January 2022
- ii. Agrees to formally 'make' the Longframlington Neighbourhood Plan in accordance with section 38A(4)(a) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
- iii. Approves the decision statement (attached at Appendix 1) required under Regulation 19 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, as amended, and
- iv. Agrees that both the Longframlington Neighbourhood Plan and the decision statement are published on the Council's website and publicised elsewhere to bring it to the attention of people who live, work, or carry out business in the neighbourhood area; and for the decision statement to be sent to the qualifying body and anyone else who asked to be notified of the decision.

#### **Link to Corporate Plan**

This report is particularly relevant to the priorities of the Northumberland County Council Corporate Plan 2020-21 in terms of empowering local communities, involving them in decisions which affect them and supporting them in embracing change.



## **Key Information**

1. The Longframlington Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared with Officer support provided to Longframlington Parish Council and has been informed by extensive community consultation and engagement. It passed Independent Examination in October 2021.
2. A referendum was held in the Parish of Longframlington on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2022, where 487 people (43.09% of the registered electors) in the Parish voted. 26 people voted no and a majority 'yes' vote of 459 people (94.25%) were in favour of making the Neighbourhood Plan.
3. Since a majority vote at the referendum was in favour of the Longframlington Neighbourhood Plan being used to make decisions on planning applications, the County Council is obliged by legislation to formally make the plan within 8 weeks of the date of the referendum.

## **Background**

4. The process for preparing a neighbourhood plan is set out in legislation and national guidance. The intention of neighbourhood planning is that local communities will engage in preparing plans which address their particular local land-use issues. Support should be secured from residents in a neighbourhood area for those policies intended to be included in the final version of the plan since unlike other planning policy documents, once a neighbourhood plan passes an independent examination it is subject to a local referendum. Only a plan that passes a referendum with a majority of support from the electorate can be 'made' (brought into legal force). Once a plan has passed referendum the local planning authority is obliged to 'make' the neighbourhood plan, unless doing so would breach or otherwise be incompatible with EU obligations.
5. Once a neighbourhood plan is 'made' it becomes a formal part of the statutory development plan for the neighbourhood area to which it relates. This means that decisions on planning applications in that area must be made in accordance with the policies in the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Policies in a made neighbourhood plan take precedence over existing non-strategic planning policies.

## **Preparation of the Longframlington Neighbourhood Plan**

6. The Longframlington Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared following extensive community consultation and engagement by the Parish Council. To maximise levels of engagement, the Parish Council used a range of methods to engage in a safe and equitable manner, having regard to Government advice on public access to buildings and social distancing. This included more targeted methods of publicity and consultation to ensure those in the community without internet access were not disadvantaged.

7. The pre-submission draft plan was subject to an eight-week consultation period by the Parish Council between March and April 2021. Following a review of representations made to the consultation, a final draft Plan was endorsed by the Parish Council and submitted to the County Council in May 2021. The Plan was then publicised by the County Council in July and August 2021, in accordance with legal requirements.
8. Following submission of the Plan, the County Council appointed an Independent Examiner. The Examination was undertaken by written representations and the Examiner's Report was published in October 2021. This report found that, with modifications, the Plan passed the necessary legal tests, and it could be put to local referendum. The County Council and the Parish Council accepted this recommendation. In accordance with the Regulations, the County Council published a Decision Statement on 12th November 2021 confirming this prior to arranging a local referendum.
9. A local referendum was held on 9th December 2021. The referendum posed the question: "Do you want Northumberland County Council to use the Neighbourhood Plan for Longframlington Neighbourhood Area to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?" To pass referendum a majority of over 50% of those turning out to vote must vote 'yes' in response to this question. A total of 497 people voted, representing 43.09% of the registered electors. A total of 459 people voted 'yes', giving a majority of 94.25%.

### **Content of the Longframlington Neighbourhood Plan**

10. The Longframlington Neighbourhood Plan contains seven policies addressing Development within and outside a Settlement Boundary, The Local Economy, Community Facilities, Recreation Areas, Biodiversity, Local Green Spaces, and Design.

### **Process for 'making' the Longframlington Neighbourhood Plan**

11. Neighbourhood plans must be 'made' by the Local Planning Authority to come into force. This function is exercised by Cabinet in Northumberland County Council. Once confirmation is given that Cabinet agrees to the making of the Longframlington Neighbourhood Plan a statement to that effect must be published on the County Council's website and the decision must be notified to certain parties and publicised more widely generally.
12. A copy of the relevant draft decision statement is attached at Appendix 1. The County Council must also publish a copy of the made Neighbourhood Plan, making it available on the Council's website and through other media. The version of the Longframlington Neighbourhood Plan which was presented for referendum is

provided at Appendix 2.

## **Implications**

<b>Policy</b>	The Longframlington Neighbourhood Plan when 'made' will form part of the statutory Development Plan.
<b>Finance and value for money</b>	Support for plan preparation costs have been met within Council budgets. The successful examination of a Neighbourhood Development Plan currently attracts £20,000 in government grant. Grant funding is being used by the County Council to provide officer support to emerging plans.
<b>Legal</b>	<p>Local planning authorities are obliged by statute to make any neighbourhood plan once a local referendum has taken place and the result is in favour of the plan being used in the determination of planning applications.</p> <p>The recommendations relate to an executive function with the meaning of S.9D(2) Local Government Act 2000 as the making of the plan is not an exception specified in regulations made under subsection 3 of that Act.</p>
<b>Procurement</b>	There are no relevant considerations.
<b>Human Resources</b>	Work on Neighbourhood Plans is carried out by members of the community through Town and Parish Councils; Northumberland County Council has a duty to support the preparation of plans.
<b>Property</b>	The made Neighbourhood Plan will apply to land and buildings owned by the County Council as they apply to land, and buildings owned by others.
<b>Equalities (Impact Assessment attached)</b> N/A	Northumberland County Council has regard to the elimination of unlawful discrimination and harassment and the promotion of equality under the Equality Act 2010 and related statutes. There are no implications arising from the Longframlington Neighbourhood Plan.
<b>Risk Assessment</b>	There are no relevant considerations.
<b>Crime &amp; Disorder</b>	There are no relevant considerations.
<b>Customer Consideration</b>	The Longframlington Neighbourhood Plan forms the most local level of planning policies in the development plan. The policies reflect the needs and aspirations of residents in shaping the future development of the Parish of Longframlington.
<b>Carbon reduction</b>	N/A
<b>Health and Wellbeing</b>	The neighbourhood plan gives more clarity over the future use and development of land in Longframlington which will contribute to the health and wellbeing of residents and businesses.
<b>Wards</b>	Shilbottle

**Background papers:**

- Longframlington Neighbourhood Plan Decision Statement (Appendix 1)
- Longframlington Neighbourhood Plan - Referendum Version (Appendix 2)
- Longframlington Neighbourhood Plan Policies Maps - Referendum Version (Appendix 3)

**Report sign off**

***Authors must ensure that relevant officers and members have agreed the content of the report:***

Finance Officer	J Willis
Monitoring Officer/Legal	Suki Binjal
Chief Executive	
Director of Planning	
Portfolio Holder	
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# Northumberland

## County Council

### Longframlington Neighbourhood Plan

### Regulation 19 Decision Statement

**Northumberland County Council has resolved to ‘make’ the Longframlington Neighbourhood Plan. The Longframlington Neighbourhood Plan has been brought into legal force. It now forms part of the statutory Development Plan for the Longframlington Neighbourhood Area which comprises the whole of the civil parish of Longframlington. Decisions on planning applications must now be made in accordance with policies in the Longframlington Neighbourhood Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.**

The Longframlington Neighbourhood Plan was submitted to Northumberland County Council in May 2021. Publicity was undertaken in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. A report following Independent Examination of the Plan was published on 19th October 2021. This report found that, with some modifications, the Plan passed the necessary legal tests, and it could be put to local referendum. The County Council accepted these modifications for the reasons set out in the Examiner’s Report. A local referendum was held in the Parish of Longframlington on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2022. A majority of those voting were in favour of the Plan being used by the County Council in making decisions on planning applications.

The Longframlington Neighbourhood Plan, as modified following Independent Examination, complies with legal requirements governing the making of neighbourhood development plans set out in the Planning Acts and associated Regulations.

Accordingly, I hereby confirm that the Longframlington Neighbourhood Plan has been made by resolution of the County Council’s Cabinet on 8th March 2022. Decisions on planning applications in the Longframlington Neighbourhood Area must now be made in accordance with policies in the Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The Longframlington Neighbourhood Plan can be viewed on the County Council’s website: [www.northumberland.gov.uk/ourplan](http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/ourplan)

Signed:

Daljit Lally  
Chief Executive, Northumberland County Council

Date:

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LONGFRAMLINGTON  
NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

# Longframlington Neighbourhood Plan Referendum Version

2021-2036



Longframlington Parish Council



# Longframlington Neighbourhood Development Plan 2021 - 2036 Referendum Version



## Foreword

Three years ago, Longframlington Parish Council agreed to set up a Steering Group, to look at how we could prepare a Neighbourhood Plan for our Parish. After several rounds of consultation, through surveys, questionnaires, and many conversations, I believe we have managed to put together a Neighbourhood Plan which reflects the views of the majority of residents, and celebrates the strengths of our village, and the wider Parish.

The Plan wouldn't have been possible without the help of a team of people, and I would like to thank them all for their time, and their support:

To the Parish Councillors, for agreeing to take the Neighbourhood Plan forward, and for their ongoing support;

To Steve Buckley, Anne Lowrie, and Laura Findlay, for their time on the Steering Group;

To the Fram News committee and their delivery team, for publicising our consultations, delivering documents, and keeping everyone informed;

To Norma Sadler, for providing information about the history of Longframlington;

To Jess Thomas-Harrison for help with various sections, and for proof-reading the entire document;

To Chris Anderson at NCC and our planning consultant, Jenny Ludman, who have been instrumental in guiding us through the process, and ensuring that the Neighbourhood Plan became a real, comprehensive, document;

And most importantly, there would be no Neighbourhood Plan without the input of the people within our community. So thank you most of all, to all of those who contributed and got involved with the process.

Allison Davis, Parish Councillor.

January 2022

# Longframlington Neighbourhood Development Plan 2021 - 2036

## Referendum Version



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Glossary of Terms

# Longframlington Neighbourhood Development Plan 2021 - 2036 Referendum Version

## 1 Introduction

### 1.1 Longframlington Neighbourhood Plan

- 1.1.1 The Localism Act 2011 introduced new powers to allow local communities to shape development in their areas by preparing a Neighbourhood Plan.
- 1.1.2 A Neighbourhood Plan sets out a vision for an area, and includes planning policies for the use and development of land. It will form part of the statutory planning framework for the area, and the policies contained within it will be used in the determination of planning applications. The most important feature of a Neighbourhood Plan is that it is prepared and agreed by local people. The work is normally carried out by a Parish or Town Council on behalf of its local community.
- 1.1.3 This Neighbourhood Plan is the Longframlington Neighbourhood Plan (referred to in this document as the LNP) and policies in the LNP will be used to determine planning applications in the Parish of Longframlington (the Neighbourhood Area) alongside other policies in the Development Plan<sup>1</sup>.
- 1.1.4 The LNP has been compiled by a Steering Group of local residents, on behalf of the Parish Council. It establishes a vision for the future of Longframlington Parish and village over the lifetime of the LNP.



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<sup>1</sup> The Development Plan consists of 'saved' policies in the Alnwick District Wide Local Plan (1997) and the Alnwick LDF Core Strategy (2007)

# Longframlington Neighbourhood Development Plan 2021 - 2036

## Referendum Version

### 1.2 Background

- 1.2.1 Longframlington village has seen periods of growth throughout its history, and the most recent period of growth has been particularly rapid. In the eight-year period since 2013, the village has increased in size by approximately 32% (approximately 140 houses), with a similar number of new houses with extant planning permissions still to be built. When all of the houses with planning permission are built, the village will have seen an increase in housing of approximately 63% since 2013.
- 1.2.2 Residents were concerned about the sustainability of this level of growth, and about the impact it would have on the village. Concerns were raised at a number of village meetings, and residents felt that a Neighbourhood Plan would allow local views to be taken into account in future planning application decisions. At the end of 2018 it was agreed that a steering group would take forward the work of preparing a Neighbourhood Plan for Longframlington, on behalf of the Parish Council. The LNP will seek to ensure that further development is at a more sustainable level.
- 1.2.3 The Steering Group began work at the beginning of 2019 and applied for designation of the Parish as a Neighbourhood Area, for the purposes of preparing the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 1.2.4 Northumberland County Council formally designated the Parish as a Neighbourhood Area on 11<sup>th</sup> March 2019, at which point the Steering Group was able to start preparing this plan.
- 1.2.5 The Longframlington Neighbourhood Area, designated for the purposes of 61G(1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, comprises the Parish of Longframlington as shown on the Policies Map in Section 14.0. The Neighbourhood Plan relates only to the Parish of Longframlington.

### 1.3 Consultation Process and Community Engagement

- 1.3.1 There have been several stages of consultation leading to the production of the LNP. The Steering Group has engaged throughout the process with the local community, through consultation events, questionnaires, the village newsletter, village Facebook pages and the Parish website. All contributions received from these consultations have been used to form the LNP, and to ensure that the LNP reflects the collective wishes of the residents who live in the Parish.
- 1.3.2 Further consultation with residents has been carried out digitally and via telephone, following the Covid-19 outbreak which has made it difficult to carry out consultation through face-to-face events.
- 1.3.3 Evidence produced by Northumberland County Council to support their emerging Local Plan has also been used. A list of this evidence is included in Appendix B. All these documents, as well as the results of the public consultation, will form the Evidence Base for the LNP.

# Longframlington Neighbourhood Development Plan 2021 - 2036

## Referendum Version

### 1.4 About this Plan

- 1.4.1 Many of the issues raised by residents during the consultations have been addressed through the policies in the LNP. Protection of the settlement boundary, housing development suitable for the Parish, support/protection for local facilities and recreation areas, and conservation of the environment are all dealt with in the coming pages.
- 1.4.2 There were other issues raised in the consultations, which do not fall under the planning system, and so cannot be dealt with by planning policies within the LNP. However, Section 14 includes a list of Community Projects which aim to address these other issues, which will be taken forward by the Parish Council and volunteers, as appropriate.

### 1.5 What happens next?

- 1.5.1 This is the Referendum version of the LNP, and will be voted on at a public referendum to be held in the Parish on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2022.
- ~~1.5.2~~ If more than 50% of those that vote in the Referendum do so in favour of the LNP being used by Northumberland County Council, then the County Council are obliged to make (adopt) the Plan.
- 1.5.3 Once made the LNP will form part of the Development Plan for the area, and policies within it will be used to help determine planning applications in Longframlington Parish, alongside other policies in the Development Plan and any other relevant material considerations.

Parish Consultation ⇒ NCC Consultation ⇒ Examiner ⇒ Referendum on Final Plan

# Longframlington Neighbourhood Development Plan 2021 - 2036

## Referendum Version

## 2 Planning Policy Background

### 2.1 Neighbourhood Plans

2.1.1 Neighbourhood Plans must pass a series of tests prescribed in legislation through the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations. These tests are collectively known as 'The Basic Conditions'. The Basic Conditions are:

- having regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State, it is appropriate to make the Neighbourhood Plan;
- the making of the Neighbourhood Plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development;
- the making of the Neighbourhood Plan is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the Development Plan for the area of the authority (or any part of that area);
- the making of the Neighbourhood Plan does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, EU obligations; and
- prescribed conditions are met in relation to the Plan and prescribed matters have been complied with in connection with the proposal for the Neighbourhood Plan. The following prescribed condition relates to Neighbourhood Plans:
- Regulation 32 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) sets out a further Basic Condition in addition to those set out in the primary legislation: that the making of the neighbourhood plan is not likely to have a significant effect on a European site (as defined in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2012) or a European offshore marine site (as defined in the Offshore Marine Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 2007) (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects). (See Schedule 2 to the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended)).

2.1.2 How the LNP meets these requirements is set out in detail in the Basic Conditions Statement which forms part of the overall Plan submitted to the County Council.

### 2.2 Local Development Plan

2.2.1 The saved strategic policies in the Development Plan (DP) for the Neighbourhood Area are the policies with which the LNP must be in general conformity. Strategic policies in the Development Plan are those 'saved' policies contained in the Alnwick District Wide Local Plan (April 1997) and the Alnwick LDF Core Strategy (October 2007). The Basic Conditions Statement provides an assessment of the extent to which the LNP is in general conformity with those policies. Appendix A lists the strategic policies which have been identified by Northumberland County Council insofar as they apply to this Neighbourhood Plan.

### 2.3 Northumberland County Council Local Plan (emerging)



# Longframlington Neighbourhood Development Plan 2021 - 2036

## Referendum Version

- 2.3.1 The Northumberland Local Plan (NLP) has finished consultation on the main modifications and awaits a final decision from the examiners that ensures it is sound and can be adopted by the County Council. It is anticipated the NLP will be adopted in early 2022. The LNP seeks to align with policies in this emerging Local Plan, to ensure consistency in policy making throughout the process and to ensure that when adopted, the NLP and the LNP are not in conflict.
- 2.3.2 The emerging NLP identifies settlement boundaries for some villages in the County. The NLP proposes a settlement boundary for Longframlington; the proposed settlement boundary in the LNP contains two additional properties that have been identified by their owners as omitted from the emerging NLP boundary, but mirrors the NLP boundary in all other respects.
- 2.3.3 A number of evidence base reports have been commissioned to assist with the production of the Northumberland Local Plan. Some of these evidence base reports have also been used to inform the LNP and are listed in Appendix A.

### 2.4 National Planning Policy Framework (July 2021)

- 2.4.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) provide the most up to date planning policy and advice from central government. Some policies contained in the current Development Plan may be in conflict with this more recent national policy and guidance, due to the age of those plans. In such circumstances, the more recent national policy and guidance will be used in plan making and decision taking. This will be explained further in the Basic Conditions Statement which will be submitted alongside the LNP.

### 2.5 Sustainable Development

- 2.5.1 The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. How sustainable development can be achieved for planning purposes is contained in Chapter 2 of the NPPF. Paragraph 11 sets out how planning policies should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. It states that plans should 'positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of their area and be sufficiently flexible to adapt to rapid change'.
- 2.5.2 Chapter 2 of the NPPF identifies economic, social and environmental objectives as being equally important in delivering sustainable development. The promotion of, and support for, sustainable development is at the heart of the community aspirations in Longframlington. This is reflected in planning policies where relevant and in the Community Projects which have been identified.
- 2.5.3 Support for sustainable development is also reflected in the vision and objectives for the Neighbourhood Area, which are set out later in the LNP.

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### 2.6 Environmental Impact and EU Obligations

- 2.6.1 Directive 2001/42/EC relates to the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment. This is often referred to as the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive. This directive is transposed into UK law through the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (the 'SEA Regulations') and it is these regulations that the plan must be compatible with to meet the Basic Conditions.
- 2.6.2 A request for a screening opinion to determine whether the Plan required a Strategic Environmental Assessment was submitted to Northumberland County Council during the outline drafting stage of the Plan. The LNP was screened 'out' and the Screening Opinion is contained within the evidence base documents listed in Appendix B.
- 2.6.3 A Habitats Regulations Screening Opinion was also sought and again, the Plan was screened out.

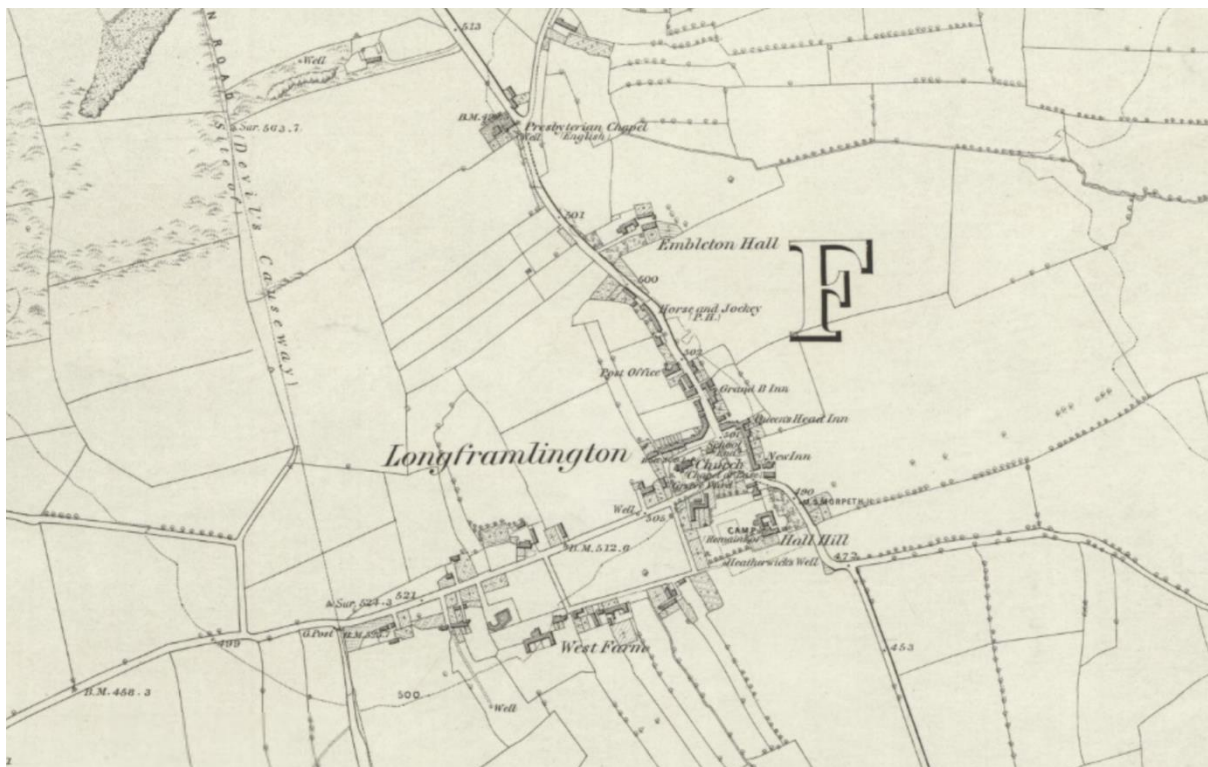


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## 3 Longframlington Parish

### 3.1 History of Longframlington Village

- 3.1.1 Longframlington village stands on the A697, which follows the line of one of the traditional routes into Scotland, branching off the A1 at Morpeth, passing Wooler, on the way up to the Scottish border at Coldstream. Longframlington started out as a largely linear village, and most of its historic buildings are situated along the main road, as can be seen on the map below.
- 3.1.2 Longframlington is a village with a long history. The Romans built a branch of Dere Street in the area, known as The Devil's Causeway, which passes through the western end of the village. After the Romans left, the Anglo-Saxons established the village and named it – 'the home of Framla's people'. The Vikings settled too, creating settlements in the Coquet Valley.
- 3.1.3 The old OS map below shows the village as it was in 1866. Some of the important green spaces in the village are already defined; Embleton Hall is shown on the east side of the village, and the old burgage plots which form an important character of the south of the village can also be seen.



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- 3.1.4 St. Mary's Church, a Grade I listed building, was built in circa 1190, of local stone quarried possibly from Onstead Quarry, to the north of the village, or from a quarry within the village itself.



- 3.1.5 Longframlington is also home to a Presbyterian Chapel. The village is believed to have had one of the earliest Presbyterian congregations in England, the Longframlington Presbyterian Meeting House, established in 1667. The first Presbyterian Chapel in England was built at Hall Hill, and regular services were held at there until a new chapel was built at the North End of the village in 1739. The existing chapel was built on the same site in 1854, and is now part of the United Reformed Church (formed in 1972 when the Presbyterian and Congregational Churches united).





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- 3.1.6 Situated only 30 miles from the Scottish border, Longframlington often found itself in the middle of Anglo-Scottish conflict and was even under Scottish rule for a time in the twelfth century. Brinkburn Priory suffered badly from Scottish attacks in the time of William Wallace and Robert Bruce. Later, the Border Reivers were active in the area, and in the eighteenth century the village was affected by the Jacobite Rebellions.
- 3.1.7 Later, large stone houses were built; a road was constructed to take mail and passengers to London and Edinburgh, and coaching inns were built in the village. Longframlington declined in relation to other villages because of the lack of a railway (Rimside Moor prevented a railway being built through the village) but it retained its rural aspect and that attracted tourists. The inns and houses provided accommodation, and the shops sold souvenirs to visitors.
- 3.1.8 Industries began in a small way, including coal mining from the seam of coal that ran through the area. There were many small pits that opened and closed over short periods along the seam; the last two larger pits (Framlington Pit and Healeycote Pit) closed in the 1930s. Other industries in the village included stone quarrying, lime burning, and tile making, but the main source of work was always agriculture.



Front Street, 1911

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## Longframlington Today

- 3.1.9 Today Longframlington continues to grow. It has a good number of village facilities, and villagers pride themselves on supporting and maintaining their local services. The Village Inn and the Granby Inn stand on the eastern side of the main road, as does the award-winning butcher's shop. Opposite the Village Inn, there is a village shop which won a Countryside Alliance "Best Rural Retailer" award in 2006, a paper shop, a hairdressing salon, and a popular bakery café.
- 3.1.10 Modern development of the village, over the last few decades, has been mainly to the west of the A697.
- 3.1.11 Longframlington has had a rapid period of growth in recent years, with approximately 140 new houses built since 2013. There are extant planning permissions for a further 140 houses which have not yet been implemented. The map below shows the locations of the new housing built since 2013 (in yellow), sites with extant planning permission but not yet built (in blue) and sites with outline permission, or granted subject to S106 agreements (in red).



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- 3.1.12 Longframlington has a number of listed buildings, the most impressive of which is Embleton Hall on the east side of the village. Other historic buildings are clustered around the core of the village; the intersection between the A697 and the road running west towards Rothbury.
- 3.1.13 Longframlington is characterised by its long-distance views, owing to its hill-top location: north towards Longframlington Common / Glantlees Hill, south over the Coquet Valley, west towards Simonside and the Northumberland National Park, and east towards the sea.
- 3.1.14 The landscapes around Longframlington are highly valued by people living locally, and the LNP seeks to conserve these landscapes by defining a settlement boundary for Longframlington to contain development within the existing defined built-up area and preserving key views out of the village.
- 3.1.15 Longframlington has a sensitive eastern boundary, with the presence of Embleton Hall, a grade II listed building with substantial grounds and gardens, and areas of woodland which it is considered important to retain. To the north of the settlement is an area called 'North End' which once was a separate hamlet and is now part of Longframlington. The countryside to the west of Longframlington is considered to be especially important, as it is from here that far reaching views across to the Northumberland National Park and the Simonside Hills can be seen. This view creates a real sense of distinctiveness in the village, and it is considered especially important to protect this area.
- 3.1.16 This area of Northumberland benefits from extremely low levels of light pollution, with the most 'pristine dark skies' in England (CPRE Night Blight Report 2016). The nearby Northumberland National Park and most of Kielder Water & Forest Park became England's first IDA International Dark Sky Park in 2013. Local people value the dark skies in the area, thanks to Longframlington's proximity to the Dark Sky Park, and its rural position.
- 3.1.17 Many of the local businesses rely to a large extent on tourism related income and employment. There are a number of caravan and small holiday-lodge parks in the Parish.

### 3.2 Community consultation

- 3.2.1 Consultation events have been held by the Parish Council with local residents. In addition, the Parish Council website includes evidence base documents and information about the LNP. A number of key issues were identified in the Neighbourhood Area which are summarised below:
- There has been a **significant amount of major housing** development provided in recent years. Some of the development is built and some in the pipeline. These ad-hoc developments have resulted in poorly integrated and disjointed development of the village.
  - Residents would like any future housing to be **well integrated, smaller in scale and well-designed**, meeting a need for young families and local people. A need for **older people's housing** and housing to meet Lifetime Homes Standard was also identified.
  - There was a strong desire to **conserve the character and rural setting of the village of Longframlington**, in particular views across towards the National Park at the western edges of the village.



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- The vast majority of people consulted felt it was really important to protect the **natural environment, biodiversity and wildlife** in the Parish, and retain the rural feel of the area.
- There was a strong desire to support the needs of the local community by **supporting the retention of existing community facilities** and supporting local business, both new and existing.
- Finally, there was a strong desire to ensure that new development is of **high-quality design** and **sympathetic to the local environment**.



Looking West from the village, towards Simonside.

# Longframlington Neighbourhood Development Plan 2021 - 2036 Referendum Version

## 4 Vision, Objectives, and Introduction to Planning Policies

### 4.1 Vision

- 4.1.1 The identification of these key issues led to the creation of a vision for Longframlington Parish. The vision, which was consulted on with the local community is as follows and forms the core intention of this Neighbourhood Plan.

#### Longframlington Neighbourhood Plan – Vision

To ensure that Longframlington remains a vibrant, sustainable and attractive place to live, we will ensure that future development preserves the character and identity of Longframlington village and the wider Parish; supports facilities and businesses that serve our community; and ensures that future development within the Parish is appropriate in terms of scale and design, respecting and valuing the historic, agricultural and rural character of the village of Longframlington and the Parish as a whole.

### 4.2 Objectives

- 4.2.1 To deliver this vision, a number of objectives have been identified:
- **Objective 1:** In order to preserve the countryside around Longframlington, and the rural setting of the village, and to direct development to the sustainable location of Longframlington village, we will identify a settlement boundary for Longframlington.
  - **Objective 2:** To support housing development in the Neighbourhood Area.
  - **Objective 3:** To support the local economy and the community by supporting businesses and safeguarding our valued community facilities.
  - **Objective 4:** To support and promote biodiversity within the Neighbourhood Area, and to ensure all new development delivers net gains for biodiversity.
  - **Objective 5:** To identify and protect Local Green Spaces, and outdoor recreation spaces in the village that are valued by the local community and are vital for creating the distinctive character of Longframlington.
  - **Objective 6:** To support sustainable and high-quality design that reflects the special character of Longframlington village.

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### 5 Policies

5.1.1 There are seven policies proposed in the LNP to deliver these objectives:

- **Policy LNP1** identifies a settlement boundary for Longframlington and outlines what types of housing development will be supported inside and outside the settlement boundary.
- **Policy LNP2** identifies ways in which planning decisions can support the local economy.
- **Policy LNP3** identifies ways in which planning decisions can support community facilities. It identifies community facilities which the community wish to keep and for which a change of use will not be acceptable except in specific circumstances.
- **LNP4** identifies outdoor recreation areas which are important to the community. This policy seeks to retain these areas for recreational use. Their loss will not be supported unless specific policy tests are met.
- **Policy LNP5** sets out expectations for delivery of net gain for biodiversity.
- **Policy LNP6** lists the Local Green Spaces which are proposed for protection in the Parish. These have been identified by the local community as special places that they would like to see protected.
- **Policy LNP7** sets out expectations with regard to high-quality and sustainable design in the Parish.

#### 5.2 Reading the Neighbourhood Plan

- 5.2.1 The Neighbourhood Plan (LNP) is part of the Development Plan along with the policies of the Local Plan and Core Strategy. Policies in the LNP will be used alongside other development plan policies to determine planning applications.
- 5.2.2 Before each policy, under the policy title, is a section of explanatory text. This text consists of descriptive and explanatory matter in respect of the policies. The text is relevant to the interpretation of each policy to which it relates. Although the supporting text is not policy, it does assist with clarifying what the policy is trying to achieve, and the intention of that policy.



## 6 Housing Development Policy

- 6.1.1 The core planning principles as set out in the NPPF include:
- allocating sufficient land suitable for development;
  - recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside; and
  - supporting rural communities within it.
- 6.1.2 Longframlington has far exceeded the national planning requirement for supply of new homes over recent years, and already has unbuilt sites within the village with planning permission for at least 150 new houses. The LNP does not allocate any additional sites for further housing development, but there are windfall sites within the village that could be used to meet any future housing requirements if necessary.
- 6.1.3 A settlement boundary is identified for the village of Longframlington and is shown on the Policies Map. This settlement boundary has been designed to recognise and protect the intrinsic character and beauty of the surrounding countryside, and the local landscapes within the Neighbourhood Area. The purpose of the settlement boundary is to identify the locations that are most suitable for sustainable development, including housing, economic, commercial and community uses
- 6.1.4 Policy LNP1 is intended to enable new development within the settlement boundary, while protecting the intrinsic beauty and character of the surrounding countryside.

### 6.2 Settlement Boundary

- 6.2.1 The proposed settlement boundary for Longframlington is shown on the Policies Map. This has been widely consulted upon and has received strong support. The proposed settlement boundary matches the proposed settlement boundary in the emerging Northumberland Local Plan, with only two small changes (see 2.3.2).
- 6.2.2 Following earlier consultations, two properties have been included within the settlement boundary, which do not fall within the boundary in the Local Plan. These properties are The Old Vicarage, and West Lane Caravan Park. Both properties are long established and are widely acknowledged to form part of the village, and have been included at the request of the landowners.
- 6.2.3 The settlement boundary has been defined using a methodology approved by the Parish Council. This methodology document forms part of the evidence base for the LNP and sets out key considerations with regard to what land to include and exclude from the settlement boundary.
- 6.2.4 The housing report, which is also included in the list of evidence base documents, sets out the number of planning permissions that have been given over recent years in the village. It is clear that the number of permissions given means that the village will have accommodated well in excess of the housing requirement that has been given by the County Council. Whilst the housing requirement is not a 'maximum' figure, the Parish Council and residents feel that

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Longframlington cannot accommodate more large-scale housing schemes within the Plan period.

6.2.5 For this reason, the settlement boundary is drawn tightly round existing built development (and land with commenced planning permissions). The plan does positively support development within the village, and there are opportunities for further development on brownfield sites within the village. In addition, national planning policy allows for rural exception sites on the periphery of rural villages to deliver local needs housing, which the Parish Council is also supportive of.

6.2.6 It is considered that the approach taken is a positive one, which seeks the right kind of development for Longframlington over the period of the LNP.

### 6.3 Policy LNP1 –Housing Development

6.3.1 There are some areas of land within the settlement boundary that could potentially be available as windfall sites for housing. This policy supports the provision of new housing development within the settlement boundary of Longframlington, to meet identified local need.

Outside the settlement boundary, only exceptional development proposals that satisfy national and strategic planning policy will be supported. This includes proposals for affordable housing delivered through rural exception sites, rural business and economic development proposals, diversification of agriculture and other land-based businesses, and proposals for community and leisure facilities and rural tourism. Isolated rural dwellings will only be supported where the proposal satisfies one or more of the exceptional circumstances set out in the NPPF.

#### **POLICY LNP1 – HOUSING DEVELOPMENT**

Development within the settlement boundary defined on the Policies Map, including new housing development and the redevelopment of previously developed land, will be supported subject to compliance with relevant policies elsewhere in the Development Plan.

Land outside the settlement boundary will be treated as countryside whose intrinsic character and beauty must be recognised in all decision making on development proposals.

Only exceptional development proposals that satisfy national and strategic planning policy will be supported outside the settlement boundary. New housing development will only be supported where it delivers affordable housing through rural exception sites, or proposals for isolated dwellings that satisfy one or more of the exceptional circumstances

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set out in the NPPF. Proposals for rural business and economic development proposals, diversification of agriculture and other land-based businesses, and proposals for community and leisure facilities and rural tourism will be supported where they accord with the NPPF and strategic policies.

## 7 The Local Economy Policy

- 7.1.1 There was strong support in the local community for small businesses, and in particular, those businesses that provide a service and/or employment locally. There was also support for people wishing to set up new businesses and in particular, support for small business units and workshops to enable people to work in the local area.
- 7.1.2 There is a recognition, particularly with changes to farming policy following the UK's departure from the EU, that farms and rural businesses may need to change and diversify to cope with these changes.
- 7.1.3 The LNP aims to support local businesses which promote prosperity and employment in the Parish, or provide a service to the Parish. Policy LNP2 will support local business in the Neighbourhood Area.
- 7.1.4 The Parish Council also plan to register certain businesses and facilities as Assets of Community Value which will afford the community six months to determine if they can raise the finance to purchase the asset if they become available for sale (See 14 Community Projects).

### **POLICY LNP2: THE LOCAL ECONOMY**

The sustainable growth of businesses and the creation of new businesses will be supported subject to policies elsewhere in the Development Plan.

The development of rural businesses outside the settlement boundary should be:

- i. located close to settlements or existing buildings, where the opportunities exist;
- ii. make use of existing buildings, where possible;
- iii. ensure new buildings are well designed and located sensitively in the landscape, respecting the character of the countryside; and
- iv. should not have an unacceptable impact on highway safety.

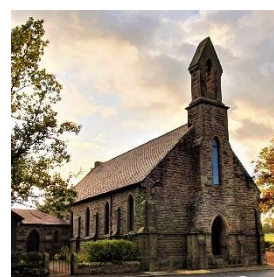
The expansion of home-based businesses will be supported provided that there are no unacceptable adverse impacts on residential amenity or highway safety

New and extended commercial premises and business units should be well related to existing development and well designed, taking account of Policy LNP7.

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## 8 Community Facilities Policy

- 8.1.1 The NPPF encourages councils to “promote the retention and development of local services and community facilities in villages, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship”.
- 8.1.2 There are a number of community facilities that have been identified by the community as important to the survival of a vibrant community in Longframlington. These places are identified in Policy LNP3 and are shown on the Policies Map.
- 8.1.3 The LNP recognises the importance of existing services and facilities to the community. The NPPF allows for policies to protect against the unnecessary loss of such essential services. Policy LNP3 seeks to ensure that local community facilities and businesses serving the community are safeguarded. Any proposals that require planning permission that would result in their loss will have to demonstrate that the existing facility is no longer needed or no longer economically viable
- 8.1.4 The Parish Council also plan to register certain businesses and facilities as Assets of Community Value which will afford the community six months to determine if they can raise the finance to purchase the asset if it becomes available for sale. (See 14 - Community Projects)



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### **POLICY LNP3 – COMMUNITY FACILITIES**

The provision of new, and the expansion of existing, community facilities will be supported where they comply with policies elsewhere in the Development Plan.

The following community facilities are identified on the Policies Map.

#### **Community Facilities:**

- CF1: Carr's Corner
- CF2: Paper Shop (including car parking area)
- CF3: Running Fox (including garden and car parking area)
- CF4: R. Green & Son (including car parking area)
- CF5: Village Inn (including car parking area)
- CF6: Granby Inn (including car parking areas)
- CF7: Cuts Both Ways
- CF8: GP Surgery (including car parking area)
- CF9: Memorial Hall (including grassed area adjacent and car parking area)
- CF10: St. Mary's Church (including Community Room and Churchyard)
- CF11: United Reformed Church and Hall

Development proposals that require planning permission that would result in the loss of any of these community facilities will only be supported where it can be demonstrated that the facility is either no longer required by the community, or no longer economically viable. In order to demonstrate that a facility is no longer economically viable, the facility must be marketed for freehold or leasehold purposes for the existing use at a reasonable commercial price for at least six months without an appropriate offer being received.



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## 9 Outdoor Recreation Areas Policy

- 9.1.1 There are a number of outdoor recreation areas that have been identified by the community as important to the survival of a vibrant community in Longframlington. These places are identified in Policy LNP4 and are shown on the Policies Map.
- 9.1.2 Many of the community recreation spaces in Longframlington have historic significance and have been an important part of the village since it began. In particular, the King George V Playing Field and the allotment sites can be seen on old maps and clearly form an integral part of the village's history, as well as providing valuable recreational space for residents.
- 9.1.3 The LNP recognises the importance of these recreation areas to the community. Policy LNP4 will ensure these areas are retained.



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### **POLICY LNP4 – OUTDOOR RECREATION AREAS**

The following outdoor recreation areas are shown on the Policies Map.

#### **Outdoor recreation areas:**

- OR1: King George V Playing Field and Playground
- OR2: Dog walking field
- OR3: Allotments
- OR4: Closed cemetery (including Commonwealth War Graves)
- OR5: Current cemetery (extended)
- OR6: Grassed recreational area outside Paper Shop
- OR7: Grassed area in Fenwick Park
- OR8: Grassed area in Armstrong Grove
- OR9: Grassed area in Knogley Way
- OR10: Grassed area in Cherryhope

Proposals resulting in the loss of any of these recreation areas will not be supported unless it can be demonstrated that the space is no longer required by the community, or where an alternative space of equivalent or better recreational value can be provided in an equally accessible location prior to the loss of the existing space.



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### 10 Biodiversity Policy

- 10.1.1 Although there are no protected sites in the Neighbourhood Area, wildlife is highly valued by the local community, with 99% of respondents to the initial survey expressing a desire to protect and enhance the area for wildlife.
- 10.1.2 The Neighbourhood Area does not have any protected sites for wildlife; there is a limited amount of woodland cover, and there are opportunities to improve habitats across the Neighbourhood Area.
- 10.1.3 This policy sets out how it is expected that 'net gain' can be delivered for biodiversity, through development. Biodiversity net gain can be provided through, for example, additional tree and hedgerow planting, incorporation of wildlife areas, links to wildlife areas, native planting, provision of nesting boxes for birds and bats, incorporating spaces in boundaries to allow hedgehog access between gardens and creating pond habitats.
- 10.1.4 In addition, there are a number of Community Projects which can be taken forward to promote and protect biodiversity in the Neighbourhood Area (see 14 – Community Projects).

#### **POLICY LNP5 - BIODIVERSITY**

New development must secure a net gain for biodiversity to be calculated in accordance with the Government policy and advice and secured through planning conditions or planning obligations.

Proposals to create new wildlife habitats and improve existing habitats identified locally will be supported.

## 11 Local Green Space Policy

- 11.1.1 Paragraphs 99 and 100 of the NPPF give local communities the opportunity to identify and protect areas of green space which are special to the local community. A number of criteria must be met, and most green spaces will not be suitable for allocation as Local Green Space. Once identified, these Local Green Spaces will be protected in a manner consistent with the protection of Green Belts, and planning applications in these areas will be determined in accordance with Green Belt policy.
- 11.1.2 In order for land to qualify as Local Green Space it must meet the following tests:
- Be in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
  - Be demonstrably special to a local community and hold a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value, tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and
  - Be local in character and not an extensive tract of land.
- 11.1.3 The Local Green Spaces identified in Policy LNP6 are of particular significance to the local community because of their biodiversity value, and their recreational value. Onstead Quarry is a green space on the edge of the village, much valued for its wildlife and tranquillity. The mature woodland between Embleton Hall and Lightpipe Farm is privately owned, but there is a public footpath through it which is well-used; the area is also highly valued for its biodiversity.
- 11.1.4 These Local Green Spaces are shown on the Policies Maps. Each Local Green Space identified has been assessed to ensure it meets the criteria set out in the NPPF. A full description of the sites and their value is provided in the Local Green Space evidence report.

### **POLICY LNP6: LOCAL GREEN SPACES**

The sites listed below and shown on the Policies Map are designated as areas of Local Green Space which will be protected in a manner consistent with the protection of land within the Green Belt. Development on the Local Green Spaces will not be supported except in very special circumstances.

LGS1: Mature Woodland between Embleton Hall and Lightpipe Farm

LGS2: Onstead Quarry

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LGS1 - Mature Woodland between Embleton Hall and Lightpipe Farm



LGS2 – Onstead Quarry



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## 12 High Quality and Sustainable Design Policy

- 12.1.1 One of the aims of the LNP is to ensure that all new development meets high standards of design and reflects the special character of this part of Northumberland, and in particular, the special character of Longframlington village. This aim is reflected in the National Planning Policy Framework which states, in paragraph 125, that design policies should be developed with local communities, so they reflect local aspirations for high quality design. Such policies should be grounded in an understanding and evaluation of each area's defining characteristics.
- 12.1.2 The defining characteristic of Longframlington has been identified repeatedly by the community. In essence, the character is of a rural village, surrounded by countryside with plentiful green spaces within the built-up areas. Natural materials for housing in Longframlington have historically been natural stone and welsh slate roofs.
- 12.1.3 There is a desire to see sustainability incorporated into design, and this can in some cases mean that modern designs can be incorporated without compromising on special character. This policy seeks to support the use of sustainable drainage systems, the incorporation of biodiversity measures and the use of the latest technology to reduce energy consumption and maximise renewables.
- 12.1.4 NPPF paragraph 134 makes it clear that significant weight should be given to development that reflects local design policies and government guidance on design and/or that promote high levels of sustainability through outstanding or innovative designs. It also makes it clear that poorly designed development should be refused.



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### **POLICY LNP7: HIGH QUALITY AND SUSTAINABLE DESIGN**

New development in the Neighbourhood Area should incorporate high quality and sustainable design that improves local character and distinctiveness. Where appropriate, this can be demonstrated by:

- a) designing development respecting local context and character in terms of scale, density, height, massing, layout, materials, hard and soft landscaping and means of enclosure; and
- b) ensuring features including windows, doors, rooflights, chimneys, flues, roof design and boundary treatments have regard to surrounding character and materials used locally; and
- c) ensuring appropriate landscaping has been incorporated into any scheme, including the retention of trees and hedgerows and the planting of new trees and hedgerows where possible and desirable; and
- d) incorporating a Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS) to manage surface water drainage and which takes opportunities to improve biodiversity (or demonstrate why such a scheme would not be practicable or necessary); and
- e) ensuring measures have been incorporated to limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation; and
- f) ensuring that the massing, height, scale and proximity to neighbouring properties of the proposed development does not result in an unacceptable loss of light, overshadowing or other significant adverse amenity impacts on existing or future residents; and
- g) ensuring opportunities have been taken where possible to incorporate embedded renewables, such as solar panels, heat pumps and other measures to reduce the carbon footprint of the building, including opportunities to minimise energy consumption in layout, orientation, and maximising solar gain; and
- h) ensuring opportunities are taken to include green spaces within development for the benefit of future residents and biodiversity; and
- i) including the provision of electric car charging points in all new housing development

## **13 Monitoring and Review**

### **13.1 Monitoring**

- 13.1.1 Effective monitoring by Longframlington Parish Council is essential to ensure the LNP is truly achieving sustainable development in the Neighbourhood Area. It also provides information to establish whether policies are effective, and whether there are changes needed to policies in the longer term.
- 13.1.2 The LNP sets out the long-term spatial vision for the area with objectives and policies to deliver that vision in the period up to 2036.
- 13.1.3** Decision making on planning applications still rests with Northumberland County Council who have their own monitoring procedures in place. Longframlington Parish Council will, however, undertake its own monitoring to evaluate the level of progress being made towards delivering the vision of the LNP.

### **13.2 Review**

- 13.2.1** It may be necessary to review the LNP in light of any significant policy shifts in the future.

### **13.3 Community Projects**

- 13.3.1 Proposals that have been identified by the local community that are not covered by planning policies will be taken forward by the Parish Council as a separate matter. These are all matters that were outside the remit of planning policy in a Neighbourhood Plan.
- 13.3.2 Monitoring carried out by Longframlington Parish Council will also seek to ascertain whether these Community Projects are being implemented.

# Longframlington Neighbourhood Development Plan 2021 - 2036 Referendum Version

## 14 Community Projects

### 14.1 Background and Context

- 14.1.1 The initial consultations during the Neighbourhood Plan process highlighted a number of issues in the Parish, which were considered important by residents. Some of the issues have been covered by the policies within the LNP, where they relate to planning matters. Some of the issues raised fall outside the remit of planning policy. Therefore, they cannot be dealt with through planning policies, and cannot form part of the main body of the LNP.
- 14.1.2 The issues which cannot be dealt with through planning policies are listed below. Background to each issue is given, along with suggested Community Projects to help address each issue.
- 14.1.3 These Community Projects are suggestions only, and do not form part of the LNP itself. The Parish Council would support these Projects, and would give assistance where possible, but delivery of the Projects would, in many cases, rely on volunteers and local organisations in the Parish. It is suggested that a Community Projects Working Group be established, to carry on the work of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, and to oversee delivery of the suggested Projects.





# Longframlington Neighbourhood Development Plan 2021 - 2036

## Referendum Version

### 14.2 Community Projects

#### **Affordable Housing & Sheltered Housing**

##### **Background:**

The overwhelming response to the initial Neighbourhood Plan consultations was that there was no need for additional housing within the Parish, and that the main priority was to establish and maintain a settlement boundary around Longframlington village, beyond which there would be a presumption against additional residential development.

However, there was also a view that if development was needed at all, that it should be focused on affordable homes for local people, and on provision of appropriate housing for elderly residents, whether that was through sheltered housing, or other suitable accommodation.

##### **Suggested Project:**

To carry out a survey of residents to establish views on these two particular types of housing need.

If responses indicate that this is an area that should be looked into further, to consider instructing a formal Housing Needs Assessment, and to consider possible sites for this type of development.

##### **Project Delivery:**

Community Projects Working Group.

#### **School Provision**

##### **Background:**

The lack of a primary or first school in the village was one of the issues most raised in the local consultations. Concerns have also been raised about the number of new houses in the Parish over recent years, and whether local secondary/middle/high school places are sufficient to meet the increased demand for places.

##### **Suggested Project:**

To liaise with NCC to discuss school place provision: to gather information about current school provision, and what options there may be for future school provision, and to provide this information back to residents.

##### **Project Delivery:**

Community Projects Working Group.

# Longframlington Neighbourhood Development Plan 2021 - 2036

## Referendum Version

### **School field site**

#### **Background:**

The old 'school field' site (between Rimside Gardens, Rimside View, and Fenwick Park) is owned by NCC and in the past was earmarked for a village school. This classification no longer applies, and there are no current plans for use of the field. This could be a good site to be utilised for community benefit (whether that is for sheltered housing / small employment 'pods' / many other possible uses). At the moment, as a Parish we have no say over the use of the field in the future. If we would like to influence what happens on that site, we can consider taking forward a Parish Council led development for affordable housing, sheltered housing or other development to meet a local need. This can be done through a Neighbourhood Development Order or a Community Right to Build order, or by an amendment to the Neighbourhood Plan.

#### **Suggested Project:**

To investigate the best way to deal with the school field site, to allow it to be used for community benefit, and to report back to the Parish Council with suggestions of how to proceed.

#### **Project Delivery:**

Community Projects Working Group.

### **Local Business and Employment**

#### **Background:**

Residents were keen both to support existing businesses within the Parish, and to increase the number of local employment opportunities within the Parish. Policy LNP2 within the LNP is intended to support existing businesses, and to encourage new business opportunities within the Parish. The Parish Council are keen to support where possible, within the constraints of relevant regulations.

#### **Suggested Project:**

Individuals and businesses are encouraged to approach the Parish Council for support.

#### **Project Delivery:**

Individuals and businesses within the Parish.

# Longframlington Neighbourhood Development Plan 2021 - 2036

## Referendum Version

### Community Facilities

#### Background:

Residents were keen to maintain the existing community facilities. Policy LNP3 of the LNP deals with this to a large extent. The Parish Council are also able to register certain businesses as Asset of Community Value, which gives the local community a chance to raise funds to buy the asset if it is put up for sale.

#### Suggested Project:

The Parish Council will consider the list of community facilities, and register those which are appropriate as Assets of Community Value

#### Project Delivery:

Parish Council.

### GP Service

#### Background:

Residents valued the GP Surgery in the village, and were keen to see the service retained, and possibly improved.

#### Suggested Project:

To review the current GP provision and other healthcare services within the Parish; to liaise with the Rothbury Practice, possibly via the Patient Participation Group; and to make suggestions and liaise with the various bodies to ensure that residents in the Parish have access to appropriate healthcare.

#### Project Delivery:

Community Projects Working Group.

# Longframlington Neighbourhood Development Plan 2021 - 2036

## Referendum Version

### **Outdoor Recreational Facilities**

#### **Background:**

Residents were keen to maintain existing recreational spaces (dealt with by Policy LNP4 of the LNP), and to improve facilities for young people. Suggestions included sports clubs, a skate park, and a running/cycling track around King George V Playing Field.

#### **Suggested Project:**

The Parish Council will continue to maintain and improve the existing play equipment and fitness equipment within the park, and to consider suggestions for additions and improvements on an ongoing basis.

#### **Project Delivery:**

Parish Council, with input from residents. Community Projects Working Group may wish to take a proactive approach with gathering suggestions.

### **Footpaths and cycling tracks**

#### **Background:**

Residents were keen to see improvements to footpaths and cycling infrastructure within the Parish.

#### **Suggested Projects:**

To review Rights of Way within the Parish, and consider options for improving accessibility of the routes.

To review the cycling infrastructure within the Parish, and make suggestions for improvements.

To review footpaths surfaces and identify and prioritise which require work now or within the next few years, and report back to Parish Council.

#### **Project Delivery:**

Community Projects Working Group.

# Longframlington Neighbourhood Development Plan 2021 - 2036

## Referendum Version

### **Traffic and crossings**

#### **Background:**

One of the most common issues to be raised during the consultations was related to car use and roads in the village: excessive driving speeds, the lack of safe crossing points, road surfaces, and the lack of parking. These issues form part of the Parish Council's ongoing work, and are consistently raised with NCC as issues facing the Parish.

#### **Suggested Project:**

The Parish Council will continue to work with NCC to improve traffic calming measures on the A697 and Rothbury Road, road re-surfacing, and pedestrian crossing points.

Opportunities for additional parking areas are limited, but use of the Tank Turn for parking will continue to be encouraged, to relieve pressure on the Rothbury Road / A697 junction, and to encourage people to use local shops.

#### **Project Delivery:**

Parish Council.

### **Bus Services**

#### **Background:**

Current bus services to and from the village are limited. Arriva operate a Thropton-Newcastle (via Morpeth) service via Longframlington. NEED Community Transport run a service to Alnwick. Glen Valley Tours run a bus to and from the Metro Centre (to Kelso) twice a week.

#### **Suggested Project:**

To assess transport provision for all age groups in the community, and to liaise with NCC and/or other bodies to address how any gaps can be filled, in order to improve accessibility of public transport in the Parish.

#### **Project Delivery:**

Community Projects Working Group.

# Longframlington Neighbourhood Development Plan 2021 - 2036

## Referendum Version

### **Heritage Assets**

#### **Background:**

Longframlington has a rich heritage, with many buildings and areas with historical importance.

#### **Suggested Project:**

To identify heritage assets within the Parish which are of local historic significance, and ensure that these non-designated heritage assets are incorporated into any list being developed by NCC.

#### **Project Delivery:**

Community Projects Working Group, liaising with the Local History Group.

### **Biodiversity**

#### **Background:**

Residents were keen for steps to be taken to protect wildlife habitats, hedgerows and trees within the Parish.

In the Parish Council's Environmental Policy (dated 4<sup>th</sup> March 2020), the Parish Council includes the following aims: to make a positive contribution to protecting and enhancing the local environment; and to manage the land under its control in a way which positively promotes biodiversity and mitigates as far as possible the effects of local flooding.

#### **Suggested Projects:**

The Parish Council will consider a range of measures to protect and enhance biodiversity within the Parish, in line with the Environmental Policy. Possible measures include:

Tree Protection Orders

Increased tree planting

Creation of wildflower areas

#### **Project Delivery:**

Parish Council. Suggestions and involvement from individuals and local groups are very welcome.

# Longframlington Neighbourhood Development Plan 2021 - 2036

## Referendum Version

### **Sustainability**

#### **Background:**

The final aim of the Parish Council's Environmental Policy, is: to inform, encourage, and support the wider community with regard to environmental issues, allowing others to save energy (and correspondingly, save money), enhance their immediate environment, and reduce their wider environmental impacts. Residents were keen to see 'green issues' addressed, particularly with regard to renewable energy and electric charging points for cars.

#### **Suggested Project:**

To support local efforts to promote sustainable policies and practices.

#### **Project Delivery:**

Individuals and businesses are encouraged to approach the Parish Council with ideas, or for support in disseminating information to residents. The Community Projects Working Group may wish to take a proactive approach in suggesting steps to be taken to promote sustainable policies and practices.

### **Village Events**

#### **Background:**

Residents were keen to see more village events, to encourage the feeling of community within the Parish.

#### **Suggested Project:**

Individuals and local groups are encouraged to approach the Parish Council with ideas for village/Parish events, and for support publicising their own events.

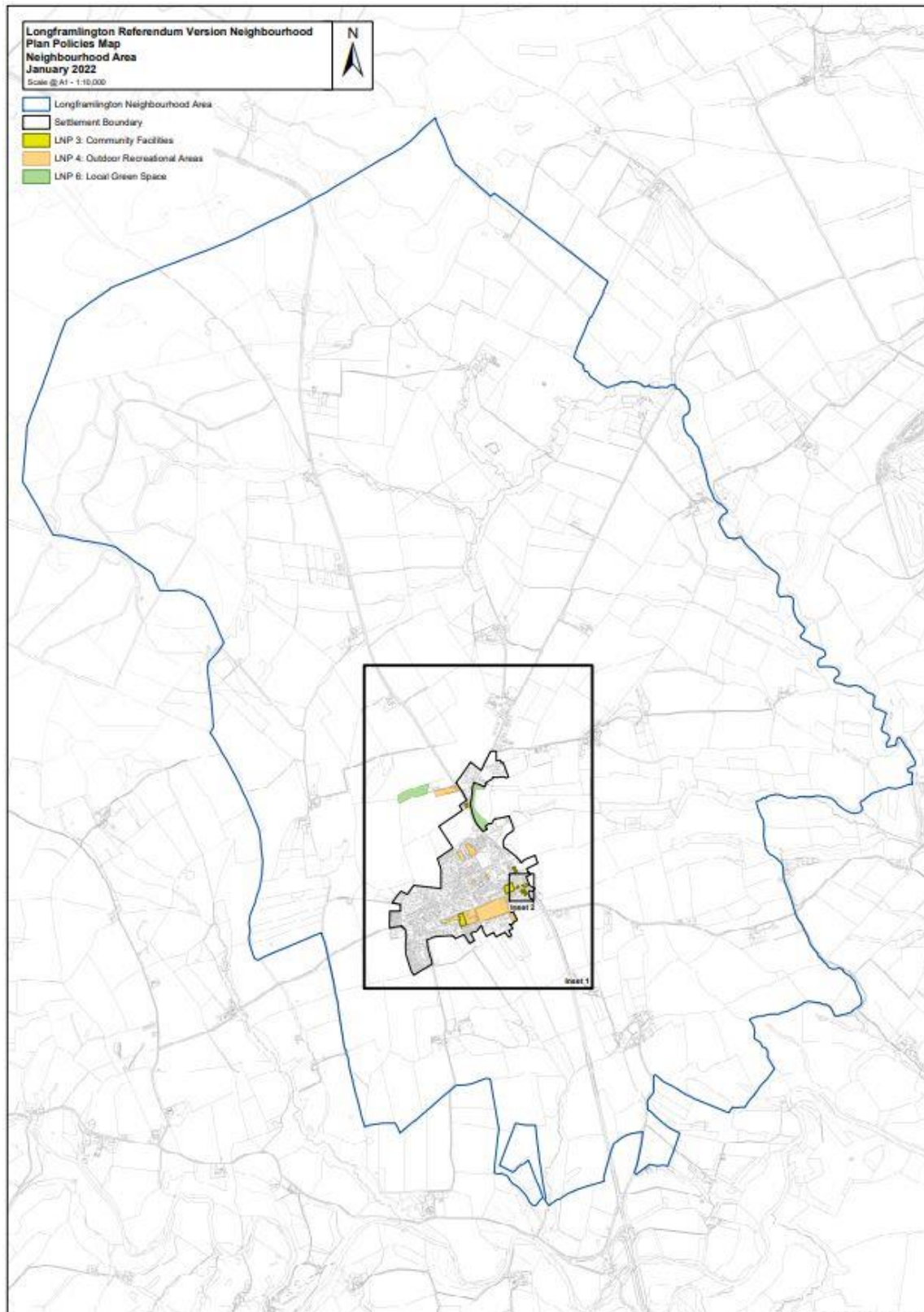
#### **Project Delivery:**

Individuals and local groups within the Parish.



# Longframlington Neighbourhood Development Plan 2021 - 2036 Referendum Version

## 15 Policies Maps (Please see large maps for detailed boundaries and designations)



# Longframlington Neighbourhood Development Plan 2021 - 2036 Referendum Version



# Longframlington Neighbourhood Development Plan 2021 - 2036

## Referendum Version

### APPENDIX A: LIST OF STRATEGIC POLICIES

#### Longframlington Neighbourhood Plan

The Strategic Policies in the current Development Plan covering the Neighbourhood Plan Area have been identified by Northumberland County Council as local planning authority. These are set out below.

The current statutory development plan for the Longframlington Neighbourhood Area is the Alnwick District Core Strategy (2007) and the “Saved” strategic policies from the Alnwick District Wide Local Plan (1997). The policies in the Longframlington Neighbourhood Plan must be assessed for general conformity with the strategic policies listed below. The findings of this assessment should be presented in the basic conditions statement. The strategic policies for the Longframlington Neighbourhood Area are as follows:

#### **Alnwick District Local Development Framework, Core Strategy Development Plan Document, Adopted October 2007.**

**Policy S1:** Location and scale of new development.

**Policy S2:** The sequential approach to development.

**Policy S3:** Sustainability criteria.

**Policy S4:** The phased release of housing land.

**Policy S6:** Provision of affordable housing.

**Policy S8:** Economic Regeneration.

**Policy S9:** Employment land allocation.

**Policy S10:** Tourism development.

**Policy S11:** Locating development to maximise accessibility and minimise impact from travel.

**Policy S12:** Protecting and enhancing biodiversity and geodiversity.

**Policy S13:** Landscape character.

**Policy S14:** Development in the open countryside.

**Policy S15:** Protecting the built and historic environment.

**Policy S17:** Town centres.

**Policy S18:** Provision of social and community facilities.

**Policy S20:** Providing for open space, sport and recreation.

**Policy S21:** Renewable energy.

## Longframlington Neighbourhood Development Plan 2021 - 2036 Referendum Version

**Policy S22:** Energy efficiency.

**Policy S23:** Planning obligations.

### **Alnwick District Wide Local Plan, 1997**

**Policy RE6:** Protection of Sites of Nature Conservation Importance.

**Policy RE7:** Protection of Local Nature Reserves.

**Policy RE13:** Protecting wildlife habitats.

**Policy RE20:** Rural diversification proposals.

**Policy RE21:** Control of new agricultural buildings.

**Policy RE23:** Development in the open countryside.

**Policy BE2:** Regional and local archaeological significance.

**Policy H10:** Residential development in open countryside.

**Policy TT1:** Controlling the redevelopment of public transport facilities.

**Policy ED4:** Providing a broader base of job opportunities on designated commercial site.

**Policy CD32:** Controlling development that is detrimental to the environment and residential amenity.

# Longframlington Neighbourhood Development Plan 2021 - 2036

## Referendum Version

### **APPENDIX B: EVIDENCE DOCUMENTS**

National Planning Policy Framework (February 2019)  
National Planning Practice Guidance (as updated)  
Alnwick District Wide Local Plan (April 1997) and the Alnwick LDF Core Strategy (October 2007)  
Northumberland County Council Landscape Character Assessment August 2010  
Northumberland County Council Strategic Housing Availability Land Assessment (2019)  
Northumberland County Wide Housing Needs Survey Final Report (updated 2015)  
SEA Screening Report 2020 (NCC)  
Habitats Regulations Screening Report (February 2021)  
Longframlington Parish Council Local Green Space Assessment (February 2021)  
Longframlington Parish Council Settlement Boundaries Methodology (February 2021)  
Longframlington Parish Council Community Facilities and Recreation Areas (February 2021)  
Longframlington Parish Council Recent House Building Figures (February 2021)  
Longframlington Parish Council Consultation Record and Responses (February 2021)



# Longframlington Neighbourhood Development Plan 2021 - 2036

## Referendum Version

### Glossary of Terms

**Affordable housing:** housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers); and which complies with one or more of the following definitions:

a) Affordable housing for rent: meets all of the following conditions: (a) the rent is set in accordance with the Government's rent policy for Social Rent or Affordable Rent, or is at least 20% below local market rents (including service charges where applicable); (b) the landlord is a registered provider, except where it is included as part of a Build to Rent scheme (in which case the landlord need not be a registered provider); and (c) it includes provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision. For Build to Rent schemes affordable housing for rent is expected to be the normal form of affordable housing provision (and, in this context, is known as Affordable Private Rent).

b) Starter homes: is as specified in Sections 2 and 3 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 and any secondary legislation made under these sections. The definition of a starter home should reflect the meaning set out in statute and any such secondary legislation at the time of plan-preparation or decision-making. Where secondary legislation has the effect of limiting a household's eligibility to purchase a starter home to those with a particular maximum level of household income, those restrictions should be used.

c) Discounted market sales housing: is that sold at a discount of at least 20% below local market value. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Provisions should be in place to ensure housing remains at a discount for future eligible households.

d) Other affordable routes to home ownership: is housing provided for sale that provides a route to ownership for those who could not achieve home ownership through the market. It includes shared ownership, relevant equity loans, other low-cost homes for sale (at a price equivalent to at least 20% below local market value) and rent to buy (which includes a period of intermediate rent). Where public grant funding is provided, there should be provisions for the homes to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for any receipts to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision, or refunded to Government or the relevant authority specified in the funding agreement.

**Amenity:** A positive element or elements that contribute to the positive character of an area, such as lack of noise and disturbance, openness, landscape, townscape, opportunities for recreation etc.

**Basic Conditions:** The Localism Act (the Act) sets basic conditions that neighbourhood development plans or orders must meet. These are that the plan or order must: a) have appropriate regard to national policy and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State, b) must contribute to the achievement of sustainable development c) must be in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the

# Longframlington Neighbourhood Development Plan 2021 - 2036

## Referendum Version

area and d) must not breach, and be otherwise compatible with, EU and Human Rights obligations

**Biodiversity:** The whole variety of life encompassing all genetics, species and ecosystem variations, including plants and animals.

**Community Facilities:** Local services and facilities that benefit the community, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.

**Density (of development):** The amount of building within an area of land. For housing it is expressed as the number of dwellings per hectare.

**Development:** Defined under the 1990 Town and Country Planning Act as 'the carrying out of building, engineering, mining or other operation in, on, over or under land, or the making of any material change in the use of any building or other land.'

**Development Plan:** The complete set of statutory land use policies and proposals for an area, used in making planning decisions. It includes adopted council development plan documents such as Local Plans, Core Strategies and Neighbourhood Plans. In this Neighbourhood Area the Development Plan consists of the Alnwick District Wide Local Plan and the Alnwick LDF Core Strategy until they are superseded by the Northumberland Local Plan when adopted.

**Environmental report:** The report that documents the assessment of the draft Plan and accompanies the draft Plan for pre-submission consultation. The environmental report needs to contain certain information as set out in Schedule 2 to the SEA Regulations 2004.

**Evidence base:** The information and data gathered by local authorities and used to inform policy development. Evidence base data is also gathered to prepare a neighbourhood Plan and is submitted to the Examiner along with the other Examination Documents.

**Habitat:** An area or natural environment in which an organism, species or population normally lives. Habitats take many forms and should not be considered in isolation as they are linked and overlap with each other.

**Habitats Regulations Assessments (HRA):** This is a general term which describes the full step-wise process required in making assessments of the impacts on European sites under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010, including the steps of screening for likely significant effects and making appropriate assessments.

**Heritage Asset:** A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage asset includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).

**Independent Examination:** The process by which an independent person examines a plan document to ensure that it is 'sound' (in the case of a Local Plan) or meets Basic Conditions (in the case of a neighbourhood Plan).



# Longframlington Neighbourhood Development Plan 2021 - 2036

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**Infrastructure:** The physical entities (for example roads, railways, sewers, pipes, telecommunications lines) that are necessary for communities to function and move around.

**Landscape Character:** The distinct and recognisable pattern of elements that occur consistently in a particular type of landscape. It reflects particular combinations of geology, landform, soils, vegetation, land use and human settlement.

**Local Green Space:** A designation that provides special protection against development for green areas of particular importance to local communities. They can be identified through Local Plans or by communities in Neighbourhood Plans.

**Material consideration:** A matter that should be taken into account in making a planning decision.

**National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF):** A Government document that sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.

**National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG):** The Government published the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in July 2018 and the National Planning Practice Guidance is regularly updated. Together, the National Planning Policy Framework and National Planning Practice Guidance set out what the Government expects of local authorities.

**Neighbourhood Area:** Longframlington Parish has been designated as the Neighbourhood Area.

**Neighbourhood Plan:** A Plan by a Parish or Town Council - the 'qualifying body' - for a particular Neighbourhood Area. Once it has been accepted by the local community through a Referendum, the Neighbourhood Plan will form part of the Development Plan.

**Northumberland County Council:** The unitary authority for Northumberland as of 1st April 2009.

**Northumberland Local Plan (emerging):** The Northumberland Local Plan is in production and is due to be adopted in summer 2021. Once in place, it will be the Development Plan for this area alongside the Neighbourhood Plan.

**Previously Developed Land (PDL) or Brownfield Land:** Land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land (although it should not be assumed that the whole of the curtilage should be developed) and any associated fixed surface infrastructure. This excludes: land that is or has been occupied by agricultural or forestry buildings; land that has been developed for minerals extraction or waste disposal by landfill purposes where provision for restoration has been made through development control procedures; land in built-up areas such as private residential gardens, parks, recreation grounds and allotments; and land that was previously-developed but where the remains of the permanent structure or fixed surface structure have blended into the landscape in the process of time.

## Longframlington Neighbourhood Development Plan 2021 - 2036

### Referendum Version

**Rural exception site:** Small sites used for affordable housing in perpetuity where sites would not normally be used for housing. Rural exception sites seek to address the needs of the local community by accommodating households who are either current residents or have an existing family or employment connection. A proportion of market homes may be allowed on the site at the local planning authority's discretion, for example where essential to enable the delivery of affordable units without grant funding.

**Significance (for heritage policy):** The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. The interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.

**Site of Special Scientific Interest:** Sites designated by Natural England under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

**SuDS (Sustainable Drainage Systems):** A sequence of water management practices and facilities designed to drain surface water in a manner that will provide a more sustainable approach than more conventional practices, such as routing run-off through a pipe to a watercourse.

**Sustainable development:** Defined by the World Commission on Environment and Development in 1987 as 'development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'. Also defined in the NPPF states in paragraph 7 that there are three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental.

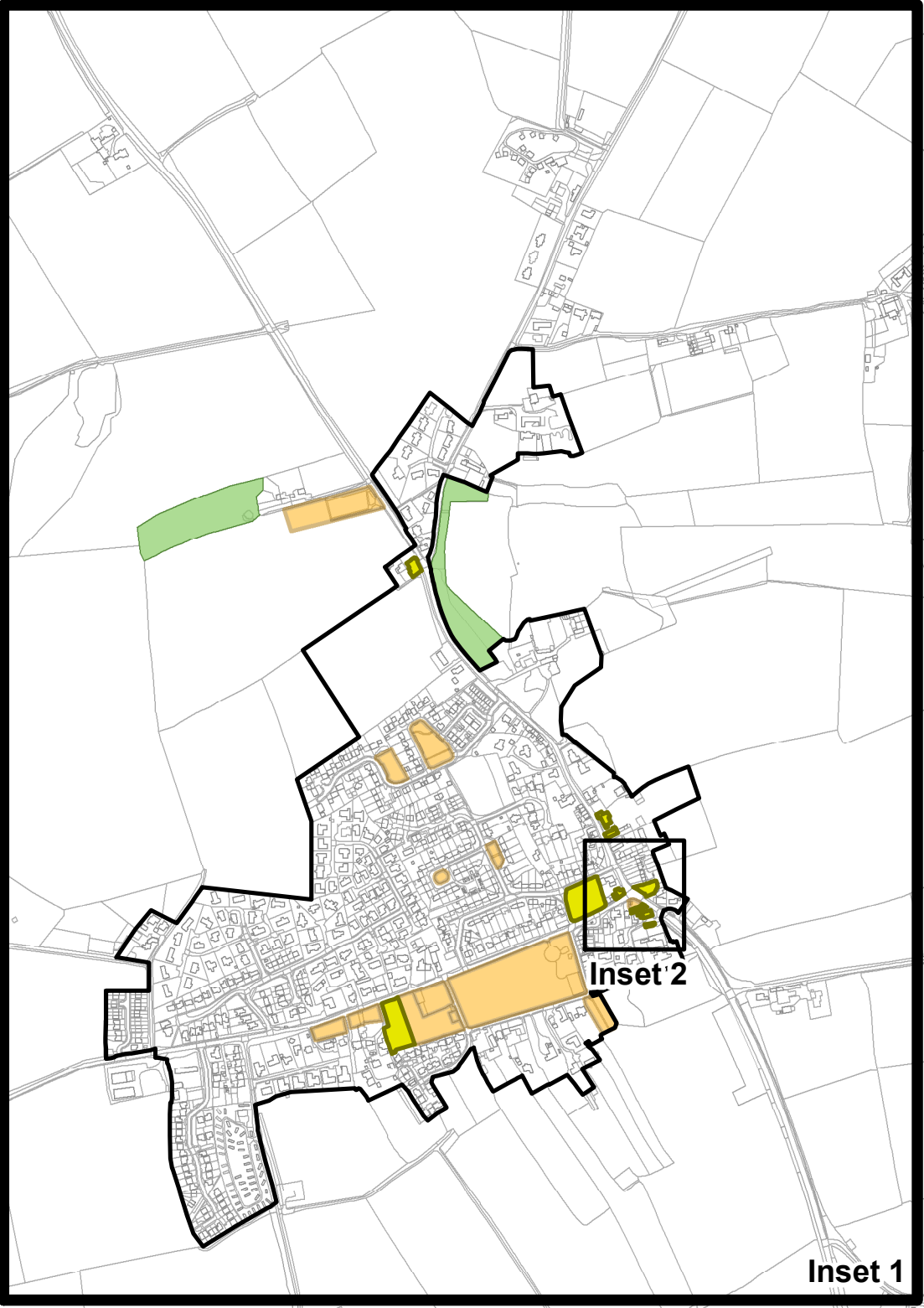
**Sustainable transport modes:** Any efficient, safe and accessible means of transport with overall low impact on the environment, including walking and cycling, low and ultra-low emission vehicles, car sharing and public transport.

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-  Longframlington Neighbourhood Area
-  Settlement Boundary
-  LNP 3: Community Facilities
-  LNP 4: Outdoor Recreational Areas
-  LNP 6: Local Green Space



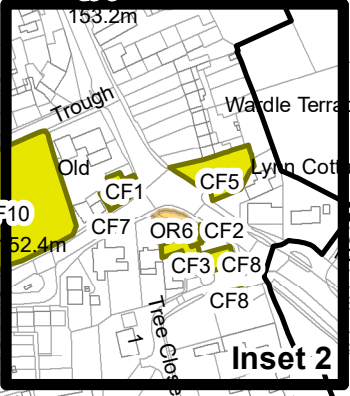
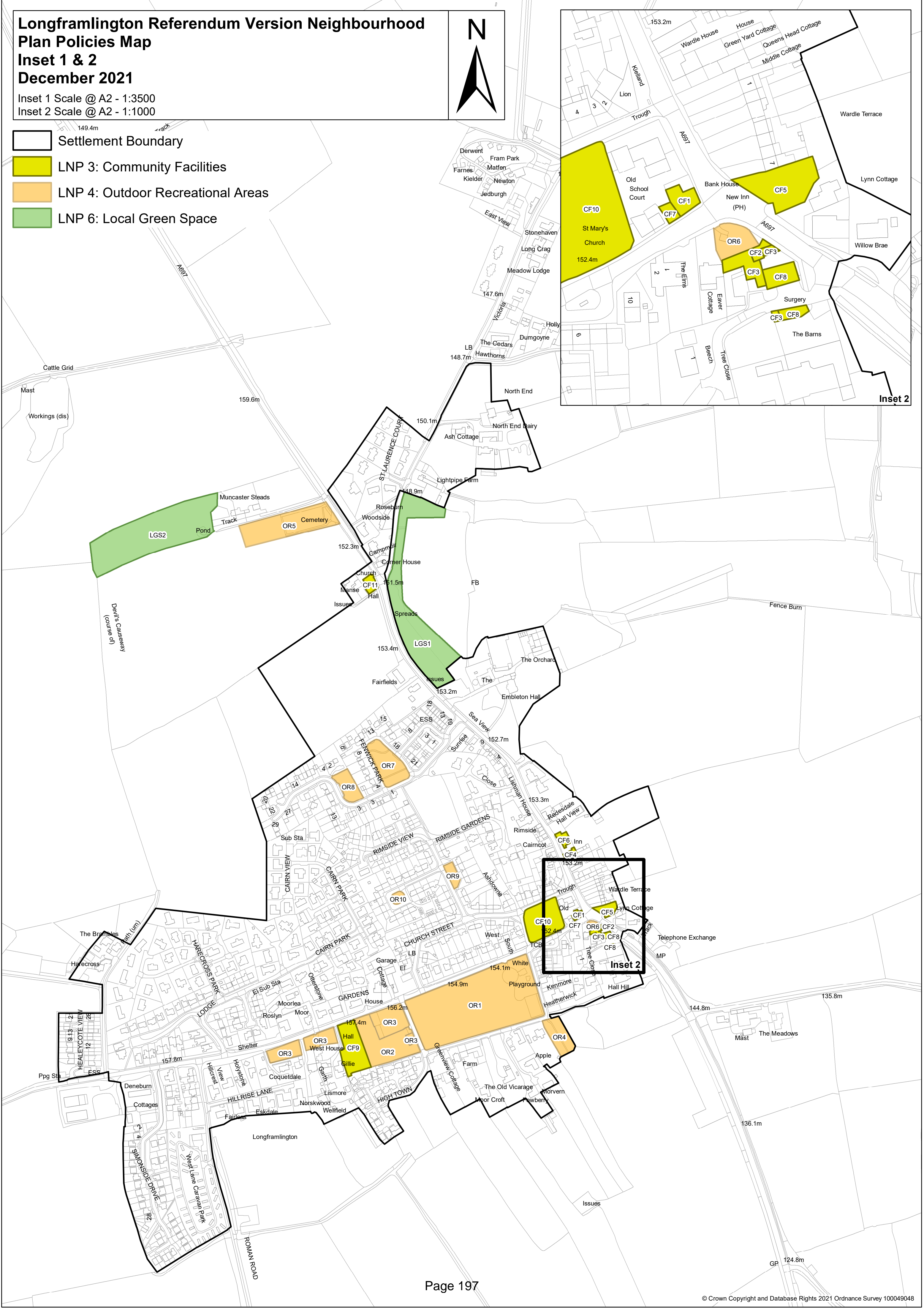
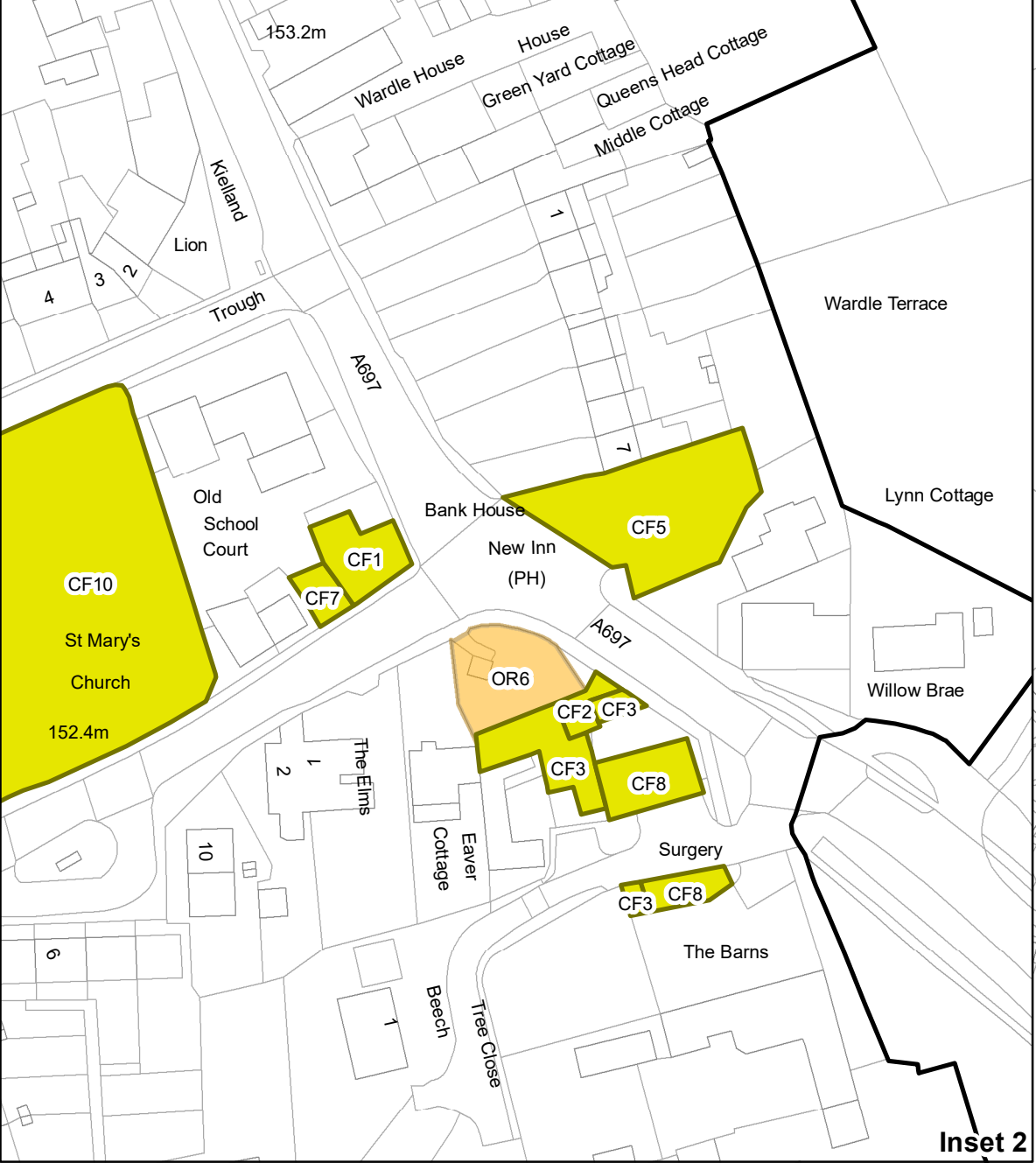
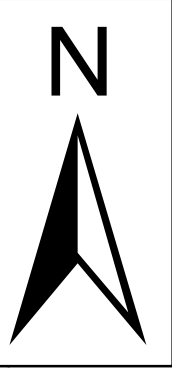


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Longframlington Referendum Version Neighbourhood  
Plan Policies Map  
Inset 1 & 2  
December 2021

Inset 1 Scale @ A2 - 1:3500  
Inset 2 Scale @ A2 - 1:1000

- Settlement Boundary
- LNP 3: Community Facilities
- LNP 4: Outdoor Recreational Areas
- LNP 6: Local Green Space



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## CABINET

8 March 2022

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### **Financial Performance 2021-22 - Position at the end of December 2021**

Report of Jan Willis, Interim Executive Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer

Cabinet Member: Richard Wearmouth, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services

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#### **1. Purpose of report**

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to ensure that the Cabinet is informed of the current financial position for the Council against the Budget for 2021-22.

#### **2. Recommendations**

- a. Members are requested to:
- i. note the report.
  - ii. note the projected underspend of £3.711 million and the assumptions outlined in this report.
  - iii. note the pressures currently identified, including the impact of Covid-19 (Table 6.1), plus additional £8.992 million Covid-19 related expenditure funded from the Contain Outbreak Management Fund (Table 6.3).
  - iv. note that it is anticipated that the Council will receive further funding of £0.270 million in relation to the income that the Council has "lost" as a result of Covid-19 for April to June 2021.
  - v. approve re-profiling to the Capital Programme of £26.560 million from 2021-22 to 2022-23 to reflect estimated expenditure levels in the current financial year.
  - vi. approve reprofiling to the Capital Programme of £0.600 million from 2022-23 to 2021-22 for the Ad Gefrin Distillery and Visitor Centre as the works have progressed faster than previously anticipated.
  - vii. approve an addition of £0.282 million to the Capital Programme to fund works repairing the damage to the highways network caused by Storm Arwen to be funded from a revenue contribution.

- viii. approve the new grants and amendments to existing grants at Appendix A and the required changes to the budgets.
- ix. note the progress on the delivery of the approved savings at Appendix B.
- x. note the use of the contingency shown at Appendix Q.
- xi. note the use of reserves shown at Appendix R.
- xii. note the virements requested by services shown at Appendix S.
- xiii. approve the following which are assumed in the forecast position:
  - approve the transfer of the unused balance of £1.227 million on the NHS Partnership Agreement Reserve to the Strategic Management Reserve.
  - approve an increase of £5.000 million to the Severe Weather Reserve which will provide the Council with the resilience to fund future repairs to highways following severe weather conditions. This is in accordance with the Department for Transport's recommendation that local highways authorities ensure they retain a contingency for repairing damage to local highways and associated assets caused by extreme weather. This has been assumed in the forecast position.
  - approve the transfer of £0.425 million to the Planning Delivery Reserve in relation to the review of the Local Plan and £0.085 million for a Gypsy and Local Travellers Plan due to the delay in adopting the Local Plan.
- xiv. Recommend that full Council agrees in principle to the addition of the Wide Area Network (WAN) project to the Capital Programme, pending the submission of a comprehensive business case by the Director of Information and Technology.
- xv. Recommend that full Council agrees that the approval of the business case and agreement to the signing of the WAN contract is delegated to the Council's Section 151 Officer in conjunction with the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services.

### **3. Link to Corporate Plan**

- 3.1 The Council's budget is aligned to the priorities outlined in the Corporate Plan 2018-21 "A Council that Works for Everyone".

### **4. Key issues**

#### **4.1 Overall Position**

- 4.1.1 The report provides information and analysis on the Council's financial performance and use of resources to the end of December 2021. The Council set its budget for 2021-22 on 24 February 2021 and this report focuses on the

financial performance to the end of December 2021 and the projected year end position at that point in time.

**5. Projected Revenue Outturn 2021-22**

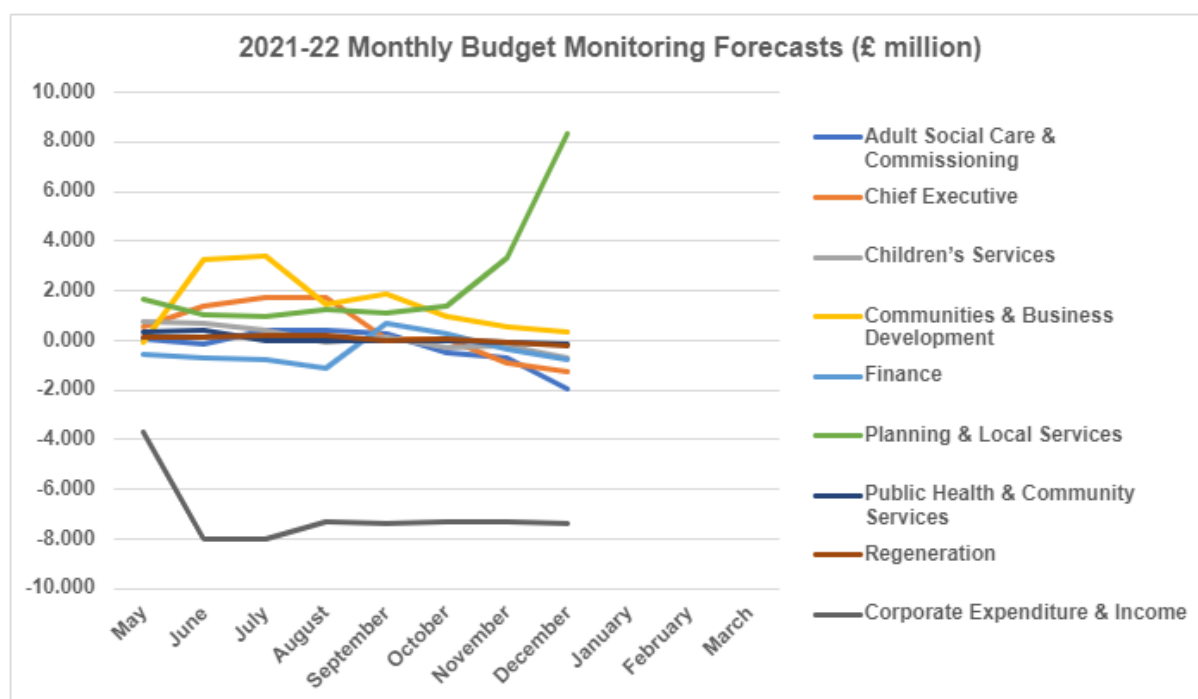
- 5.1 The Council's projected revenue outturn position, within each service area is shown in summary at Section 6 of the report (figures in brackets denote an underspend); and in detail within Appendices C - O of the report.
- 5.2 The Council's overall annual revenue expenditure is managed across a number of areas:
- a. The General Fund with a net budget of £344.076 million, providing revenue funding for the majority of the Council's services.
  - b. The Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) of £146.729 million in 2021-22, which is ring-fenced for schools funding, overseen by the Schools' Forum, and managed within the Children's Services Directorate.
  - c. Public Health, a ring-fenced grant of £16.891 million in 2021-22, must be spent to support the delivery of the Public Health Outcomes Framework and is managed within Public Health and Community Services.
  - d. The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) with anticipated gross expenditure of £37.299 million in 2021-22, is ring-fenced, and reported separately from the General Fund, and is managed within the Regeneration, Commercial and Economy Directorate.

## 6. General Fund

6.1 The following table provides a summary of how each Directorate is performing against the General Fund revenue budget for the 2021-22 financial year.

Service	Budget	Forecast Outturn	Variance	Variance BAU	Variance Covid-19
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Adult Social Care & Commissioning	102.994	101.057	(1.937)	(3.882)	1.945
Chief Executive	30.005	28.781	(1.224)	(1.551)	0.327
Children's Services	65.649	64.921	(0.728)	(1.606)	0.878
Communities & Business Development	15.020	15.382	0.362	(0.865)	1.227
Finance	24.186	23.388	(0.798)	(1.900)	1.102
Planning & Local Services	75.981	84.284	8.303	7.980	0.323
Public Health & Community Services	3.880	3.762	(0.118)	(0.365)	0.247
Regeneration	2.323	2.112	(0.211)	(0.211)	0.000
<b>Total Services</b>	<b>320.038</b>	<b>323.687</b>	<b>3.649</b>	<b>(2.400)</b>	<b>6.049</b>
Corporate Expenditure and Income	24.038	15.752	(8.286)	0.224	(8.510)
<b>Total Net Expenditure</b>	<b>344.076</b>	<b>339.439</b>	<b>(4.637)</b>	<b>(2.176)</b>	<b>(2.461)</b>
<b>Budget funded by:</b>					
Council Tax	(203.149)	(203.149)	0.000		
Retained Business Rates	(61.924)	(61.924)	0.000		
Revenue Support Grant	(10.508)	(10.508)	0.000		
Other Corporate Grants	(28.851)	(28.851)	0.000		
Earmarked Reserves	(26.557)	(25.361)	1.196		
Covid-19 Grant – Pressures	(8.509)	(8.509)	0.000		
Covid-19 Grant – Sales, fees & charges	0.000	(0.270)	(0.270)		
Covid-19 LCTS Grant	(4.578)	(4.578)	0.000		
<b>Total Funding of Services</b>	<b>(344.076)</b>	<b>(343.150)</b>	<b>0.926</b>		
<b>Net Total</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>(3.711)</b>	<b>(3.711)</b>		

6.2 The following graph provides a trend analysis of the forecast outturn, by directorate over the year to date:



6.3 The Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF) was made available to support Council activity to mitigate and manage local outbreaks of Covid-19. The funding available to the Council in 2021-22 is £9.444 million. Of which, £8.992 million has been allocated to services to support the local response to the pandemic.

Service	Funding
	£m
Adult Social Care & Commissioning	0.686
Chief Executive	0.819
Children's Services	2.188
Communities & Business Development	1.517
Planning & Local Services	2.166
Public Health & Community Services	1.616
<b>Total COMF Allocated</b>	<b>8.992</b>

The Department of Health and Social Care has confirmed that unspent funds from COMF can be carried forward to financial year 2022-23. It is anticipated that the Council will carry forward £0.452 million.

**7. Other General Fund Items**

- 7.1 Appendix A is a schedule of all new grants and amendments to existing grants (capital and revenue) which the Council has been awarded during October to December 2021.
- 7.2 The Council at its meeting in February agreed to implement a range of savings and efficiencies totalling £8.172 million in 2021-22. A recent review of the delivery of those savings has been conducted and the results are illustrated at Appendix B.
- 7.3 Appendix Q is a schedule of all items which have been released from contingency during October to December 2021.
- 7.4 Appendix R is a schedule of the movement in the Council's Reserves.
- 7.5 Appendix S is a schedule of virements during October to December 2021.

**8. Ring-fenced Accounts - Dedicated Schools' Grant (DSG) - £1.941 million forecast underspend**

2021-22 Budget	Gross Expenditure	Gross Income	Net Revenue Budget	Net Outturn	Variance
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Dedicated Schools' Grant	146.560	(146.560)	0.000	(1.941)	(1.941)

8.1 The DSG budget includes £146.729 million allocation in 2021-22 and a surplus of £0.898 million carried forward from 2020-21. However, £1.067 million has already been earmarked for use in 2022-23 and this has been transferred to the DSG reserve. The DSG is forecast to underspend by £1.941 million and the details explaining the factors leading to this variance are contained within Appendix G.

**9. Ring-fenced Accounts - Public Health - £0.574 million forecast underspend**

2021-22 Budget	Gross Expenditure	Gross Income	Net Revenue Budget	Net Outturn	Variance
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Public Health	17.062	(17.062)	0.000	(0.574)	(0.574)

9.1 It is anticipated that £0.574 million will be transferred to the Public Health reserve balance at the end of 2021-22. Further details on the Public Health budget are contained within Appendix L.

**10. Ring-fenced Accounts - Housing Revenue Account (HRA) - £0.102 million forecast underspend**

2021-22 Budget	Gross Expenditure	Gross Income	Net Revenue Budget	Net Outturn	Variance
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Housing Revenue Account	37.299	(37.915)	(0.616)	(0.718)	(0.102)

10.1 The HRA is forecast to underspend by £0.102 million and the details explaining the factors leading to this variance are contained within Appendix M.



## **11. CAPITAL PROGRAMME**

- 11.1 The Capital Programme for 2021-22 totalling £290.549 million was agreed by full Council on 24 February 2021.
- 11.2 The Capital Programme has changed during the year as the phasing of schemes was reviewed at the end of the previous financial year with £1.170 million re-profiled from 2020-21 to 2021-22 and a mid-year review resulting in a net in-year reprofiling of £99.329 million from 2021-22 to 2022-23. In addition, further approvals totalling £22.330 million for additional schemes and resourcing has been agreed.

11.3 The following table sets out the position as at the end of December:

Directorate	Original Budget	Approved Adjustments	Revised Budget	Expenditure to date	Forecast Expenditure	Net Variance	Over / (Under) spend	Reprofiling
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Adult Social Care & Commissioning	4.140	(1.660)	2.480	1.313	2.255	(0.225)	-	(0.225)
Chief Executive's	2.142	0.017	2.159	1.391	2.159	-	-	-
Children's Services	25.716	3.536	29.252	17.980	25.137	(4.115)	0.438	(4.553)
Communities & Business Development	25.898	(10.458)	15.440	12.525	15.482	0.042	0.042	-
Finance	48.024	(8.987)	39.037	12.299	29.081	(9.956)	(1.138)	(8.818)
Planning & Local Services	68.238	(5.373)	62.865	37.058	57.451	(5.414)	0.030	(5.444)
Public Health & Community Services	32.968	(18.636)	14.332	7.333	11.855	(2.477)	-	(2.477)
Regeneration	83.423	(34.268)	49.155	20.183	43.888	(5.267)	(0.224)	(5.043)
<b>Total Programme</b>	<b>290.549</b>	<b>(75.829)</b>	<b>214.720</b>	<b>110.082</b>	<b>187.308</b>	<b>(27.412)</b>	<b>(0.852)</b>	<b>(26.560)</b>
<b>Financed by:</b>								
Capital Receipts	3.980	-	3.980					
External Grants	109.226	(24.357)	84.869					
GF Borrowing	150.964	(37.197)	113.767					
GF Revenue Contributions (RCCO)	0.755	0.804	1.559					
HRA Contributions (MRR & RCCO)	25.624	(15.079)	10.545					
<b>Total Financing</b>	<b>290.549</b>	<b>(75.829)</b>	<b>214.720</b>					

11.4 Year-to-date capital expenditure is £110.082 million. The major areas of capital investment during the year to date are as follows:

- i. £32.709 million invested in transport schemes including infrastructure, traffic management and integrated transport schemes.
- ii. £17.980 million invested in school buildings, including the construction of new schools at Hexham and a contribution to Ashington Academy to partially refurbish the building to improve educational and dining facilities.

- iii. £5.013 million invested in fleet replacement.
  - iv. £12.798 million invested in leisure facilities including the construction of new leisure centres in Berwick and Morpeth.
  - v. £7.299 million invested in the Council's housing stock.
- 11.5 There is a net forecast underspend of £27.412 million across the 2021-22 Capital Programme comprising of £26.560 million reprofiling from 2021-22 to 2022-23 and £0.852 million underspend. A summary of the significant variances can be found at Appendix P with an explanation of those greater than £0.250 million.
- 11.6 It is recommended that Cabinet approves reprofiling of £26.560 million from 2021-22 to 2022-23.
- 11.7 A contribution of £0.600 million was included in the Council's 2021-22 MTFP for the Ad Gefrin Distillery and Visitor Centre. This was subsequently reprofiled in the Financial Performance 2021-22 – Position at the end of June 2021 report to Cabinet (7 September 2021) into 2022-23 as expenditure was not expected to reach the trigger point for the payment to be made in the current financial year. However, expenditure has accelerated since then and it is now expected the payment will be required to be made in the current financial year.
- 11.8 It is recommended that Cabinet approves reprofiling of £0.600 million from 2022-23 to 2021-22 for the Ad Gefrin Distillery and Visitor Centre.
- 11.9 Following Storm Arwen £0.282 million of capital expenditure has been identified to repair damage to the highways network including the replacement of streetlighting columns, replacing highways signage and repairs to the Holy Island causeway and refuge.
- 11.10 It is recommended that Cabinet approves £0.282 million to the capital programme to fund works repairing the damage the highways network caused by Storm Arwen funded from a revenue contribution.
- 11.11 The Council has a Wide Area Network (WAN) that connects all of the Council's properties across Northumberland, and this allows staff in these facilities to connect to all corporate systems, email, and the Internet.
- The Council currently has several contracts in place to connect its sites. Including its data centres, there is one main contract which has been in place since 2015. This contract terminates in September 2022 and is based on outdated technology limiting the speed of connectivity between buildings.
- The Council also has several contracts in place to provided Internet services to the Council and schools.

The intention is to conduct a procurement which brings together all of the contracts and deliver economies of scale, whilst making contract and supplier management significantly easier.

The plan is to publish an invitation to tender for a replacement solution in March 2022 with a view to signing contracts in July 2022.

As these are significant contracts both in terms of value and complexity, work on the procurement process began in 2021. To identify viable solutions, suppliers were invited to several informal engagement sessions to discuss the Council's requirements and to understand how suppliers would best deliver those requirements and to ascertain if suppliers could deliver additional value as part of this contract.

There were a number of suppliers that articulated a solution which is believed would add significant value not just to the Council but to the residents and businesses in Northumberland. These suppliers discussed a project where they would work with fibre delivery partners and could commit to delivering an enhanced gigabyte fibre network throughout Northumberland. They predicted that they would pass up to 65,000 properties, providing those properties with a significant improvement to the current copper infrastructure that exists in most of the county at present.

This type of approach would require a significant capital investment from the supplier and therefore in order to make this sustainable, suppliers indicated they would be looking for a minimum term of 20 years.

The current WAN contract has been in place for six years and expires in September 2022. If the Council was to adopt this approach, contracting for 20+ years, the contract would need to ensure that technology refreshes were built in at regular intervals and that value for money tests were included to ensure the contract was still appropriate. Other local authorities that have entered into these long-term contracts have specified technology and value for money reviews are undertaken every five years with a technology refresh at least every seven years.

Several other local authorities in the Northeast are contemplating this approach, and both Sunderland and Newcastle have recently signed contracts for 22 years.

The new infrastructure would build on the Local Full Fibre Network project that is currently being delivered and would provide significant bandwidth increases in significant areas of the County.

This project has not been identified in the medium-term financial plan and there is currently no capital commitment for this project.

The successful supplier will be required to make a significant capital investment to deliver this solution as well as the Council.

The estimated capital cost for the Council is expected to be in the region of £6.000 million and the revenue cost £1.000 million (this would deliver an annual revenue saving of approximately £0.300 million).

Funding solutions for this project will be explored in the next few months but the project will require capital investment from the Council. It may be possible to set aside funds in a reserve at the year end to contribute towards the costs of this project that will be incurred during the 2022-23 financial year. The Section 151 Officer will ensure that the Cabinet is apprised of any developments with regard to this project.

It is however anticipated that the majority of the expenditure will not be incurred in financial year 2022-23 but the contract will need to be signed to commit to the project in July of this year. Due to the tight timescales and the wider benefits that it is anticipated that this project will bring Northumberland, it is recommended that full Council agrees in principle to the project pending the agreement of a comprehensive business case. The Director of Information and Technology will submit a full business case which will be included in the 2023-24 Capital Programme at the appropriate time.

It is also recommended that the approval of the business case and agreement to the signing of the contract is delegated to the Council's Section 151 Officer in conjunction with the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services.

## **12. Capital Receipts**

- 12.1 The level of 2021-22 Capital Receipts available to support the 2021-22 Capital Programme was estimated to be £3.980 million (£1.870 million General Fund and £2.110 million HRA). A capital receipt of £4.000 million has been received which was not factored into the original estimate and the current forecast is that General Fund capital receipts will total £5.500 million. (Comprising of £4.781 million completed and available for use in year and a proportion of the Terms Agreed and Contracts Exchanged amounts, which will be available for use by 31 March 2022). The estimated overachievement of £3.630 million will be utilised to support the Capital Programme in 2021-22. The following table demonstrates the current position with regard to asset disposals:

<b>General Fund Capital Receipts Activity During 2021-22</b>	<b>Actual £m</b>
Completed and available for use in year	4.781
On the market	0.790
Terms Agreed	2.435
Contracts exchanged	0.325

- 12.2 The closing balance on the capital receipts reserve at 31 March 2021 was £4.025 million (£4.023 million HRA). This is available to support the Capital Programme in 2021-22.

### 13. TREASURY MANAGEMENT

- 13.1 The Treasury Management Strategy Statement for 2021-22 was agreed by full Council on 24 February 2021.

- 13.2 The following table summarises the Council's quarterly borrowing activity for October to December 2021:

	Previous Quarter	Movement- December 2021	Current
Outstanding principal - at quarter end (£m)	808.200	(19.212)	788.988
Weighted average interest rate - year to date (%)	2.821	0.044	2.865
Quarter end external borrowing as % of Operational Boundary (Borrowing)	77.507	(1.842)	75.665

- 13.3 Whilst the Council has an overall cap on borrowing through an Authorised Limit, the Operational Boundary is where the Council would expect its borrowing to be. At the end of December 2021, the Council's external borrowing represented 75.67% of its Operational Boundary, which was approved as part of the Treasury Management Strategy for 2021-22. The Operational Boundary is only a guide and may be breached or undershot without significant concern, with borrowings driven by economic and market considerations as well as interest rates.

- 13.4 The following table provides an analysis by type of the quarterly borrowing activity for October to December 2021:

Lender Category	Repayment Type	Opening Balance	Repaid – Q/E Dec 2021	New Borrowing Q/E Dec 2021	Closing Balance
		£m	£m	£m	£m
PWLB	EIP	9.252	(4.250)	-	5.002
PWLB	Annuity	0.592	-	-	0.592
Salix	EIP	0.018	(0.002)	0.040	0.056
PWLB	Maturity	445.704	-	-	445.704
Other Local Authorities	Maturity	107.034	(15.000)	-	92.034
Other/Market	Maturity	245.600	-	-	245.600
<b>Total</b>		<b>808.200</b>	<b>(19.252)</b>	<b>0.040</b>	<b>788.988</b>

13.5 The following table summarises the Council's quarterly investment activity for October to December 2021:

	<b>Previous Quarter</b>	<b>Movement - Q/E Dec 2021</b>	<b>Current</b>
Outstanding principal - at month end (£m)	222.150	(1.050)	221.100
Weighted average interest rate - year to date (%)	0.548	(0.010)	0.538

13.6 The following table provides an analysis by type of the quarterly investment activity for October to December 2021:

<b>Category</b>	<b>Opening Balance</b>	<b>Repaid – Q/E Dec 2021</b>	<b>New Investment Q/E Dec 2021</b>	<b>Closing Balance</b>
	<b>£m</b>	<b>£m</b>	<b>£m</b>	<b>£m</b>
Term Deposit Banks	20.000	-	-	20.000
Term Deposit Building Societies	20.000	-	-	20.000
Term Deposit Other Local Authorities	33.250	(3.250)	10.000	40.000
Money Market Funds	118.900	(133.615)	135.815	121.100
Notice Accounts	30.000	(10.000)	-	20.000
<b>Total</b>	<b>222.150</b>	<b>(146.865)</b>	<b>145.815</b>	<b>221.100</b>

13.7 New investments during the quarter ended 31 December 2021 consisted of a £10.000 million term deposit with another local authority, for a period of four months at a rate of 0.03%. There was a net investment of Money Market Funds of £2.200 million. The movement in the Money Market Funds represents daily deposits and withdrawals to manage cashflow.



## Implications

<b>Policy</b>	This is the fourth year of this Administration's Medium-Term Financial Plan; and it fully supports the priorities outlined in the Corporate Plan 2018-21 - A Council that Works for Everyone.
<b>Finance and value for money</b>	The report is of a financial nature and the detail is contained within the body of the report.
<b>Legal</b>	There are no immediate legal implications arising from the recommendations within this report.
<b>Procurement</b>	There are no specific procurement implications within this report.
<b>Human Resources</b>	There are no specific human resources implications within this report.
<b>Property</b>	There are no specific property implications within this report.
<b>Equalities</b> (Impact Assessment attached) Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	There are no specific equalities implications within this report.
<b>Risk Assessment</b>	The risks associated with the budget were considered in February 2021 and were considered to be acceptable.
<b>Crime &amp; Disorder</b>	There are no specific crime and disorder implications within this report.
<b>Customer Consideration</b>	There are no specific customer consideration implications within this report.
<b>Carbon reduction</b>	There are no specific carbon reduction implications within this report.
<b>Health &amp; Wellbeing</b>	The Council's budget is founded on the principle of promoting inclusivity.
<b>Wards</b>	All wards.

## Background papers

Cabinet 9 February 2021 and Council 24 February 2021: Budget 2021-22 and Medium-Term Financial Plan 2021-24

## Report sign off

	<b>Name</b>
Interim Monitoring Officer/Legal	Suki Binjal
Deputy Section S151 Officer	Alison Elsdon
Relevant Executive Director	Jan Willis
Chief Executive	Daljit Lally
Portfolio Holder(s)	Richard Wearmouth

## Author and Contact Details

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<b>Directorate:</b>	Adult Social Care & Commissioning
<b>Grant Awarding Body:</b>	Department of Health & Social Care
<b>Name of Grant:</b>	Adult Social Care Infection Control 2021-22 - Round 3
<b>Purpose:</b>	To provide support to all adult social care providers in the county to reduce the rate of Covid-19 transmission within and between care settings through effective infection prevention and control practices and increase Covid-19 and flu vaccine uptake among staff.
<b>Value:</b>	£1,853,656
<b>Recurrent/Non-recurrent:</b>	Non-recurrent
<b>Profiling:</b>	60% paid October 2021 and 40% paid January 2022

<b>Directorate:</b>	Adult Social Care & Commissioning
<b>Grant Awarding Body:</b>	Department of Health & Social Care
<b>Name of Grant:</b>	Adult Social Care Omicron Support Fund
<b>Purpose:</b>	In recognition of the increased pressure on existing funding sources caused by the Omicron variant. Local Authorities have discretion to use the funding as needed locally, to support the adult social care sector, including relevant local authority staff, in its Covid-19 response.
<b>Value:</b>	£380,363
<b>Recurrent/Non-recurrent:</b>	Non-recurrent
<b>Profiling:</b>	January 2022

<b>Directorate:</b>	Adult Social Care & Commissioning
<b>Grant Awarding Body:</b>	Department of Health & Social Care
<b>Name of Grant:</b>	Adult Social Care Rapid Testing Fund 2021-22 – Round 3
<b>Purpose:</b>	To support the testing of staff and visitors in care settings to identify and isolate positive Covid-19 cases, and to enable close contact visiting where possible.
<b>Value:</b>	£890,606
<b>Recurrent/Non-recurrent:</b>	Non-recurrent
<b>Profiling:</b>	60% paid November 2021 and 40% paid January 2022

<b>Directorate:</b>	Adult Social Care & Commissioning
<b>Grant Awarding Body:</b>	Department of Health & Social Care
<b>Name of Grant:</b>	Workforce Recruitment and Retention Fund for Adult Social Care
<b>Purpose:</b>	To support local authorities to address adult social care workforce capacity pressures in their geographical area through recruitment and retention activity.
<b>Value:</b>	£1,030,150
<b>Recurrent/Non-recurrent:</b>	Non-recurrent
<b>Profiling:</b>	60% paid November 2021 and 40% paid January 2022

<b>Directorate:</b>	Adult Social Care & Commissioning
<b>Grant Awarding Body:</b>	Department of Health & Social Care
<b>Name of Grant:</b>	Workforce Recruitment and Retention Fund for Adult Social Care – Round 2
<b>Purpose:</b>	To support local authorities to address adult social care workforce capacity pressures in their geographical area through recruitment and retention activity.
<b>Value:</b>	£1,901,816
<b>Recurrent/Non-recurrent:</b>	Non-recurrent
<b>Profiling:</b>	70% paid December 2021 and 30% paid February 2022

<b>Directorate:</b>	Adult Social Care & Commissioning
<b>Grant Awarding Body:</b>	Department of Health & Social Care
<b>Name of Grant:</b>	Community Support Grant
<b>Purpose:</b>	To provide Transforming Care Partnerships and Integrated Care Systems with additional funding to facilitate timely community discharge to reduce the net number of people with learning disabilities and/or autism who are inpatients in NHS hospital settings.
<b>Value:</b>	£198,222
<b>Recurrent/Non-recurrent:</b>	Funding available 2021-22 and 2022-23
<b>Profiling:</b>	January 2022 and January 2023

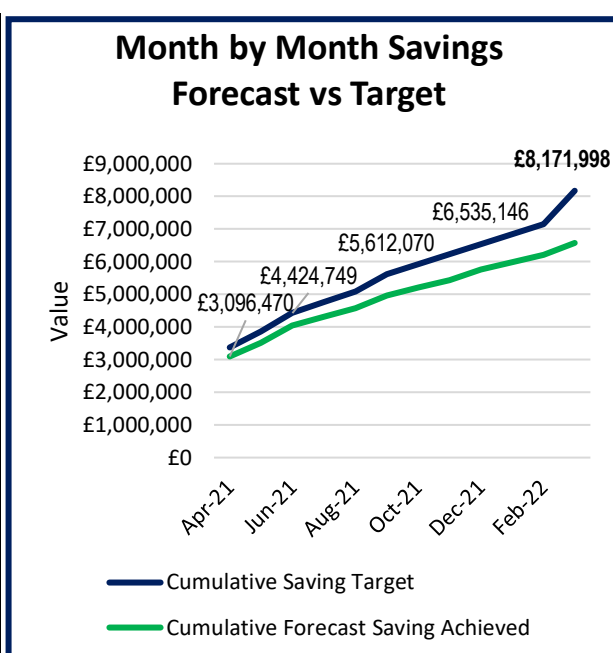
<b>Directorate:</b>	Children's Services: Education and Skills
<b>Grant Awarding Body:</b>	Department for Education
<b>Name of Grant:</b>	Dedicated Schools Grant
<b>Purpose:</b>	The grant is paid in support of the local authority's school budget. The increase for 2021-22 relates to the High Needs Block where there has been a reduction in the number of placements commissioned outside of the Local Authority or with independent providers. The additional funding for 2020-21 relates to the Early Years Block where funding was agreed in November 2021 based upon census data for January 2021.
<b>Value:</b>	£46,000 for 2021-22 and £196,000 for 2020-21
<b>Recurrent/Non-recurrent:</b>	Recurrent
<b>Profiling:</b>	Received in 25 equal instalments across the year

<b>Directorate:</b>	Public Health and Community Services
<b>Grant Awarding Body:</b>	Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities
<b>Name of Grant:</b>	Homelessness Prevention Grant - 2021-22 Exceptional Winter Top up Grant
<b>Purpose:</b>	The additional funding will support local authorities to help vulnerable households with rent arrears to reduce the risk of them being evicted and becoming homeless, including helping households to find a new home where necessary.
<b>Value:</b>	£103,040
<b>Recurrent/Non-recurrent:</b>	Non-recurrent
<b>Profiling:</b>	January 2022

## Section 151 Officer Budget Savings Overview Report

*This report page has been set up to provide a collective overview of actual savings achieved versus profiled targets which were planned in advance of the start of the new financial year. The report also provides an overview of the progress of planned milestones completed to achieve savings within the financial year.*

Overview	
Date of Report	25 January 2022
Budget Year	2021-22
Planned Savings	55
Year End Target Value of Savings	£8,171,998
Forecast Savings	£6,573,363
% of Savings Achieved	80%
Value of Savings Yet to be Achieved	£1,598,635
Total Milestones Set	129
Total Milestones Completed to Date	63
% of Milestones Completed	49%



Directorate Overview							
Directorate	Exec Director	Number of Savings	Savings Target	Forecast Savings	Total Planned Milestones	Completed Milestones	% Completed Milestones
Adults and Children	Cath McEvoy-Carr	24	£4,636,000	£4,303,237	61	34	56%
Chief Executive	Daljit Lally	4	£197,000	£47,128	5	0	0%
Planning & Local Services	Rob Murfin	10	£1,628,000	£1,011,998	29	20	69%
Regeneration	Rick O'Farrell	3	£305,000	£58,000	3	3	100%
Finance	Jan Willis	9	£854,000	£803,000	19	4	21%
Communities & Business Development	Maureen Taylor	4	£510,000	£350,000	11	2	18%
Public Health & Community Services	Liz Morgan	1	£42,000	£0	1	0	0%

## Forecast Revenue Outturn - Detailed budget summary by Service

## Service: Adult Social Care &amp; Commissioning

Summary by Service	2020-21 Outturn	Budget	Forecast Outturn	Variance	Variance BAU	Variance Covid-19
Service	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Commissioned Services	69.322	73.164	73.528	0.364	(1.581)	1.945
In-house Services	9.488	9.124	8.124	(1.000)	(1.000)	0.000
Care Management	13.002	14.656	13.728	(0.928)	(0.928)	0.000
Support & Other Services	6.859	6.050	5.677	(0.373)	(0.373)	0.000
<b>Total Adult Social Care &amp; Commissioning</b>	<b>98.671</b>	<b>102.994</b>	<b>101.057</b>	<b>(1.937)</b>	<b>(3.882)</b>	<b>1.945</b>

## NOTES - Predicted Year End Variances of £0.250 million or more

The main reasons for the forecast position for Adult Social Care and Commissioning are outlined below:

- a. Commissioned Services is forecast to overspend by £0.364 million. The Commissioned Services position is still volatile as the service recovers from the most severe phases of lockdown. There are still significant numbers of care home vacancies although the direction of travel is that these seem to be reducing at a slow pace. The overall cost of home care has increased as result of higher-than-average costs as many clients demand this option due to restrictions affecting care homes. It is not clear when this will settle due to the latest issues in relation to recruitment and retention of staff particularly in home care which means that providers are struggling to pick up new packages. The overspend is primarily due to additional costs linked to Covid-19, outlined below:
  - i. It is forecast that Commissioned Services will incur additional expenditure of £1.045 million supporting external care providers in response to Covid-19.
  - ii. It is estimated that £0.900 million will be spent on high-cost care packages for home care clients who are reluctant to go into residential care due to Covid-19. Officers will monitor the position closely and update members via future reports if appropriate; and,
  - ii. It is forecast that the business-as-usual purchased care will underspend by £1.581 million. The key reason for this is primarily down to the Covid-19 arrangement where NHS England funded additional interim care packages for up to 6 weeks following hospital discharge. This lasted until the end of June 2021 after which they are continuing to fund for up to 4 weeks. This funding will not continue indefinitely but has been a significant source of financial support to the Council during the Covid-19 period.



- b. In-House Services is forecast to underspend by £1.000 million. This is due to the following:
  - i. Staffing-related budgets are forecast to underspend by £1.036 million. In order to comply with social distancing measures, not all services have been operating to full capacity. As a result of this, posts are being held vacant for longer and the need for overtime and the use of casual staff has reduced.
  - ii. It is anticipated that the redesign of the Telecare system will not be implemented this financial year resulting in £0.310 million of the approved £0.400 million saving not being achieved. Alternative efficiencies are being considered; and,
  - ii. There are a number of minor variations across a variety of non-staffing and income related budgets which result in a forecast underspend of £0.274 million.
- c. Care Management is forecast to underspend by £0.928 million. This is due to the following:
  - i. Staffing-related budgets are forecast to underspend by £0.864 million because of vacant posts.
- d. Support & Other Services is forecast to underspend by £0.373 million. This is due to the following:
  - i. Staffing-related budgets are forecast to underspend by £0.227 million because of vacant posts.

Note - The difference between the figures shown in the table and the explanations above consist of a number of minor variations within each area.

## Forecast Revenue Outturn - Detailed budget summary by Service

## Service: Chief Executive

Summary by Service	2020-21 Outturn	Budget	Forecast Outturn	Variance	Variance BAU	Variance Covid-19
Service	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Chief Executive	0.467	0.428	0.421	(0.007)	(0.007)	0.000
Fire & Rescue	14.535	16.136	16.238	0.102	0.011	0.091
Human Resources	3.019	4.101	3.286	(0.815)	(0.815)	0.000
Internal Audit	0.664	0.620	0.611	(0.009)	(0.009)	0.000
Legal	2.327	2.592	2.530	(0.062)	(0.063)	0.001
Transformation	(0.932)	0.234	0.233	(0.001)	(0.001)	0.000
Policy	0.425	0.519	0.443	(0.076)	(0.076)	0.000
Democratic Services	2.794	3.124	2.853	(0.271)	(0.288)	0.017
Elections	0.639	1.244	1.023	(0.221)	(0.270)	0.049
Public Relations	0.866	1.007	1.143	0.136	(0.033)	0.169
<b>Total Chief Executive</b>	<b>24.804</b>	<b>30.005</b>	<b>28.781</b>	<b>(1.224)</b>	<b>(1.551)</b>	<b>0.327</b>

## NOTES - Year End Variances of £0.250 million or more

The main reasons for the forecast position for Chief Executive are outlined below:

- a. Human Resources is forecast to underspend by £0.815 million due to:
  - i. An underspend on staffing amounting to £0.343 million due to a number of vacant posts throughout the service;
  - ii. A £0.600 million underspend on the Apprenticeship Programme due to lower apprenticeship numbers and the implementation of the new pay framework for Apprentices and Graduates being paused until next year; and,
  - iii. A £0.200 million savings target in relation to the centralisation of training which will not be achieved. This has been identified as a recurrent pressure in the 2022-23 budget which is due to be considered by Council in February.
- b. Democratic Services is forecast to underspend by £0.271 million due to an underspend relating to staff vacancies of £0.142 million and an underspend on councillors' allowances and expenses of £0.085 million.
- c. Elections is forecast to underspend by £0.221 million due largely to an underspend on the cost of the county and parish elections.

Note - The difference between the figures shown in the table and the explanations above consist of a number of minor variations within each area.

## Forecast Revenue Outturn - Detailed budget summary by Service

## Service: Children's Services: Children's Social Care

Summary by Service	2020-21 Outturn	Budget	Forecast Outturn	Variance	Variance BAU	Variance Covid-19
Service	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Adolescent Services	3.308	3.450	3.209	(0.241)	(0.325)	0.084
Family Placement	12.083	12.238	12.068	(0.170)	(0.170)	0.000
Purchase Budgets	8.528	8.101	8.459	0.358	0.199	0.159
Early Intervention and Prevention	3.507	6.041	5.110	(0.931)	(0.958)	0.027
Local Children's Safeguarding Board	0.042	0.125	0.014	(0.111)	(0.111)	0.000
Looked after Children	3.760	2.157	2.442	0.285	(0.199)	0.484
Social Work Teams	9.460	9.275	9.169	(0.106)	(0.106)	0.000
District Admin Offices	0.763	0.983	0.828	(0.155)	(0.155)	0.000
Family and Disability Services	2.714	2.780	2.782	0.002	0.002	0.000
Safeguarding Standards	1.099	1.228	1.142	(0.086)	(0.086)	0.000
Other Children's Services	1.834	1.829	1.732	(0.097)	(0.097)	0.000
<b>Total Children's Social Care</b>	<b>47.098</b>	<b>48.207</b>	<b>46.955</b>	<b>(1.252)</b>	<b>(2.006)</b>	<b>0.754</b>

## NOTES - Year End Variances of £0.250 million or more

The main reasons for the forecast position for Children's Social Care are outlined below:

- a. The Adolescent Services budgets are forecast to underspend by £0.241 million.
  - i. There is an underspend on staffing of £0.225 million across the service due to difficulty in recruiting to cover vacancies across the team.
- b. The Purchase budget is forecast to overspend by £0.358 million, this is due to the following:
  - i. There is an overspend on secure accommodation of £0.180 million. There have been two secure order placements made in year, one of which remains in place with the young person at Kyloe House;
  - ii. There is an expected overspend of £0.112 million on professional services associated with on-going court proceedings; and,
  - iii. There is a £0.125 million underspend on external residential care placements. There has been

a reduction in the number of placements used, however this is partially offset by the cost of agency staff required to support short term emergency placement packages for young people over 16 that can be attributed to Covid-19 at a cost of £0.159 million. There has been a change in legislation from September 2021, meaning that children under the age of 16 cannot be placed in unregulated placements.

- c. The Early Intervention and Prevention budget is forecast to underspend by £0.931 million. This is due to the following:
  - i. Public Health funding of £0.750 million has been received to support the cost of services delivered through Early Intervention and Prevention that are in line with the terms and conditions of the grant; and,
  - ii. There are underspends of £0.193 million across the service on staffing and travel.
- d. The Looked After Children budget is forecast to overspend by £0.285 million. This is due to the following:
  - i. Kylee House secure unit is expected to overspend by £0.307 million due to an underspend on staffing of £0.108 million offset by a shortfall in income from other local authorities that purchase placements of £0.422 million. The unit has 12 bed and 2 step down beds available and is usually fully occupied but requires 11 beds to be full to achieve a breakeven position and cover the running costs of the unit. As a result of Covid-19, they are running at reduced capacity and expect occupancy of 9.5 beds on average over the financial year. This occupancy rate is higher than the majority of other national units

Note - The difference between the figures shown in the table and the explanations above consist of several minor variations within each area.

## Forecast Revenue Outturn - Detailed budget summary by Service

## Service: Children's Services: Education &amp; Skills

Summary by Service	2020-21 Outturn	Budget	Forecast Outturn	Variance	Variance BAU	Variance Covid-19
Service	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Director of Education & Skills	0.367	0.267	0.261	(0.006)	(0.006)	0.000
Curriculum & Learning	1.220	0.087	0.205	0.118	(0.006)	0.124
Alternative Education (Virtual Headteacher)	0.374	0.417	0.417	0.000	0.000	0.000
Special Educational Needs & Disability	5.915	6.508	7.068	0.560	0.560	0.000
School Organisation	11.696	10.163	10.047	(0.116)	(0.116)	0.000
School Improvement	0.221	0.000	(0.032)	(0.032)	(0.032)	0.000
<b>Total Education &amp; Skills</b>	<b>19.793</b>	<b>17.442</b>	<b>17.966</b>	<b>0.524</b>	<b>0.400</b>	<b>0.124</b>

## NOTES - Year End Variances of £0.250 million or more

The main reasons for the forecast position for Education and Skills are outlined below:

- a. The Special Educational Needs & Disability budget is forecast to overspend by £0.560 million.
  - i. £0.715 million overspend on SEN Home to School Transport. The forecast is based on 1,369 pupils and incorporates all agreed routes for the Autumn term. The next 12 months will see a review take place of all contracts which is likely to generate some savings to offset against the increase in numbers, but as yet, this cannot be quantified.
  - ii. There is an underspend on the SEND Commissioning team of £0.095 million as the cost of Paediatric OT provision will now be met from the High Needs block of the Dedicated Schools Grant.
  - iii. There is an underspend on the Preparing for Adulthood team of £0.061 million which is a combination of non-staffing underspend and additional income received.

Note - The difference between the figures shown in the table and the explanations above consist of a number of minor variations within each area.

## Forecast Revenue Outturn - Detailed budget summary by Service

## Service: Children's Services: Dedicated Schools' Grant

Summary by Service	2020-21 Outturn	Budget	Forecast Outturn	Variance	Variance BAU	Variance Covid-19
Service	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Schools Block	82.993	87.203	86.833	(0.370)	(0.370)	0.000
Central Schools Block	2.494	2.981	2.939	(0.042)	(0.042)	0.000
High Needs Block	34.129	38.607	37.432	(1.175)	(1.195)	0.020
Early Years Block	16.622	17.769	17.611	(0.158)	(0.158)	0.000
Additional 2020-21 grant	0.000	0.000	(0.196)	(0.196)	(0.196)	0.000
<b>Total Dedicated Schools' Grant</b>	<b>136.238</b>	<b>146.560</b>	<b>144.619</b>	<b>(1.941)</b>	<b>(1.961)</b>	<b>0.020</b>

## NOTES - Year End Variances of £0.250 million or more

In 2021-22 the Council expects to receive Dedicated Schools' Grant totalling £146.729 million, which is ring-fenced and will be passported through to fund schools; with an element retained centrally by the Council to provide a range of support to schools. Schools that have transferred to academy status receive their funding directly from the Department for Education – this amounts to a further £117.624 million for 2021-22.

- a. The Schools Block is forecast to underspend by £0.370 million.
  - i. There has been a refund from the Education and Skills Funding Agency of £0.185 million relating to school places at two academies that transitioned from Middle Schools to Primary Schools during 2020-21 as initial pupil funding was overstated.
  - ii. The English as an Additional Language (EAL) Service is expecting to underspend by £0.083 million due to additional income received under the Voluntary Persons Resettlement Scheme.
  - iii. The Growth fund has underspent by £0.077 million as fewer additional surplus places were required in September 2021 than anticipated.
- b. The High Needs Block is expecting to underspend by £1.175 million, this is due to the following:
  - i. The Inclusion Service is now predicting an underspend of £0.308 million. This is based upon current pupils and an estimate of a further 7 exclusions per month from January onwards.
  - ii. There is an overspend across the SEN Top-ups budget of £0.546 million predominantly due to growth in the number of young people in Northumberland Special Schools., with an additional 17 places in the summer term and 69 places across the Autumn term.
  - iii. There is an underspend across Independent Special School places of £1.146 million,



- growth was added to this budget for 2021-22 which has not been required due to a significant number of leavers at the end of the Summer term and additional places commissioned in Northumberland Special Schools at an additional cost of £0.161 million.
- iv. There is an underspend of £0.312 million across SEN Support Services including £0.086 million on staff vacancies and travel, £0.088 million on running costs and a further £0.108 million in additional income.
  - c. During 2020-21 all school phases increased their reserves due to their partial closure for some pupils and the additional grant funding they have been able to access as a result of Covid-19. This excludes Trust Schools as their school balances are held separately from the main school reserve. The position for 2021-22 shows that schools expect to be able to maintain their reserves during the coming year:

	Closing School Reserve	Closing School Reserve	Estimated School Reserve
	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
	£m	£m	£m
<b>Primary/First</b>	2.381	3.843	4.150
<b>Middle</b>	0.714	0.862	0.791
<b>Secondary/High</b>	(1.669)	(0.495)	(0.078)
<b>Special/PRU</b>	0.872	1.330	0.893
<b>Overall</b>	<b>2.298</b>	<b>5.540</b>	<b>5.756</b>

Overall, there are 14 schools predicting a deficit position compared to 21 schools in the previous year. Of these, 10 schools have an approved licensed deficit, 2 schools have a minor deficit of less than 0.05% of their budget; and work is ongoing with the remaining 2 schools to work towards an achievable budget recovery plan.

Note - The difference between the figures shown in the table and the explanations above consist of a number of minor variations within each area.

## Forecast Revenue Outturn - Detailed budget summary by Service

## Service: Communities &amp; Business Development

Summary by Service	2020-21 Outturn	Budget	Forecast Outturn	Variance	Variance BAU	Variance Covid-19
Service	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Customer Services	1.704	2.001	1.586	(0.415)	(0.426)	0.011
Registrars & Coroners	2.197	1.217	1.418	0.201	0.181	0.020
Tourism, Culture, Leisure & Heritage	12.361	9.563	10.631	1.068	(0.128)	1.196
Improvement & Innovation	1.196	1.540	1.278	(0.262)	(0.262)	0.000
Northumberland Communities Together	0.006	0.460	0.200	(0.260)	(0.260)	0.000
Information Governance	0.236	0.239	0.269	0.030	0.030	0.000
<b>Total Communities &amp; Business Development</b>	<b>17.700</b>	<b>15.020</b>	<b>15.382</b>	<b>0.362</b>	<b>(0.865)</b>	<b>1.227</b>

## NOTES - Year End Variances of £0.250 million or more

The main reason for the forecast position for Communities & Business Development is outlined below:

- a. Customer Services is forecast to underspend by £0.415 million. Within the Contact Centre and One Stop shops there is a £0.374 million underspend on staffing vacancies. Of this underspend, £0.188 million is attributed to nine staff who are working on Test & Trace calls and are being funded from the Contain Outbreak Management Fund.
- b. Registrars & Coroners is forecast to overspend by £0.201 million due to:
  - i. A £0.358 million overspend within Coroners in relation to post mortems and body storage costs; and,
  - ii. A £0.260 million underspend within Registrars due to an over recovery of income due to the increase in weddings and associated fees following Covid-19.
- c. The Tourism, Culture, Leisure & Heritage Service is forecast to overspend by £1.068 million due to a forecast cost of £1.069 million to provide additional support to Active Northumberland in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. This figure could vary in the future; officers will monitor the position closely and update the value within future reports if appropriate.
- d. Improvement & Innovation is forecast to underspend by £0.262 million due to an underspend on staffing costs with a number of posts within the service being funded from the Contain Outbreak Management Fund.

- e. Northumberland Communities Together is forecast to underspend by £0.260 million due to a number of posts within the service being funded from the Contain Outbreak Management Fund.

Note - The difference between the figures shown in the table and the explanations above consist of a number of minor variations within each area.

## Forecast Revenue Outturn - Detailed budget summary by Service

## Service: Finance

Summary by Service	2020-21 Outturn	Budget	Forecast Outturn	Variance	Variance BAU	Variance Covid-19
Service	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Revenues & Benefits	1.593	1.603	1.103	(0.500)	(0.300)	(0.200)
Information Services	9.161	9.180	10.157	0.977	(0.237)	1.214
Corporate Finance	22.839	5.839	5.298	(0.541)	(0.541)	0.000
Strategic Property	5.296	6.835	6.667	(0.168)	(0.256)	0.088
Procurement	1.343	0.729	0.163	(0.566)	(0.566)	0.000
<b>Total Finance</b>	<b>40.232</b>	<b>24.186</b>	<b>23.388</b>	<b>(0.798)</b>	<b>(1.900)</b>	<b>1.102</b>

## NOTES - Year End Variances of £0.250 million or more

The main reasons for the forecast position for Finance are outlined below:

- a. The Revenues and Benefits Service is forecast to underspend by £0.500 million due to:
  - i. An underspend on staffing amounting to £0.571 million due to a number of vacant posts throughout the service which are not expected to be filled.
  - ii. Additional new burdens grant income of £0.647 million, mainly for the administration of the Covid-19 business grant schemes and the transition to Universal Credit; partly offset by £0.135 overspend on the Restart programme for Council Tax and Business Rates and overspend on agency staff costs of £0.220 million to cover additional work due to Covid-19.
  - iii. An overspend on the Cost of Benefits in relation to Rent Allowance and Rent Rebate payments of £0.357 million. This is due to two reasons; an increase in overpayments to claimants for which only a 40% subsidy is received and an increase in the number of supported exempt accommodation schemes that do not attract a 100% subsidy. This figure is offset by £0.178 million Discretionary Housing Grant not included in the budget. The grant relates to 2020-21, but was not accrued; and,
  - iv. A £0.237 million net under recovery of council tax legal costs and reduction in court fees due to the Hardship Fund scheme, which has reduced the liability of the working age council tax support claimants and the court fee per summons reducing from £3.00 to £0.50.
- b. Information Services is forecast to overspend by £0.977 million due to:
  - i. An overspend of £0.410 million in relation to additional Covid-19 costs, including the delayed

- implementation of Microsoft Office 365 along with costs in relation to a remote working solution, additional IT kit requirements and underachieved SLA income.
- ii. A revenue contribution, which will be funded from the Covid-19 grant allocation, to fund capital expenditure of £0.804 million in respect of the desk top refresh programme, due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.
- iii. An underspend on staffing amounting to £0.232 million due to a number of vacant posts throughout the year.
- iv. Unachieved savings of £0.100 million for removal of software licences which have not been realised. This saving is from previous years and has been included as a pressure in the MTFP which is to be considered by County Council in February.
- c. Corporate Finance is forecast to underspend by £0.541 million due to:
  - i. An underspend of £0.292 million in relation to vacant posts which are now being or have been filled.
  - ii. An underspend of £0.135 million on professional services; and,
  - iii. An underspend of £0.093 million on external auditor fees.
- d. Strategic Property is forecast to underspend by £0.168 million due to:
  - i. A forecast underspend of £0.242 million on County Hall running costs, including the restaurant service, due to the county hall refurbishment and reduced service requirements; and,
  - ii. An overspend of £0.200 million on repairs and maintenance on county owned buildings.
- e. Procurement is forecast to underspend by £0.566 million due to:
  - i. An underspend on staffing of £0.137 million due to vacant posts; and,
  - ii. An overachievement of income of £0.360 million in relation to procurement rebate income and feed in tariff income.

Note - The difference between the figures shown in the table and the explanations above consist of a number of minor variations within each area.

## Forecast Revenue Outturn - Detailed budget summary by Service

## Service: Planning and Local Services

Summary by Service	2020-21 Outturn	Budget	Forecast Outturn	Variance	Variance BAU	Variance Covid-19
Service	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Local Services Management	24.527	24.556	24.534	(0.022)	(0.022)	0.000
Neighbourhood Services	11.711	10.439	10.517	0.078	0.005	0.073
Waste PFI Contract	19.037	21.286	21.736	0.450	0.200	0.250
Technical Services	21.083	18.392	25.542	7.150	7.150	0.000
<b>Total Local Services</b>	<b>76.358</b>	<b>74.673</b>	<b>82.329</b>	<b>7.656</b>	<b>7.333</b>	<b>0.323</b>
Planning	1.343	1.024	1.671	0.647	0.647	0.000
Corporate Health & Safety	0.274	0.284	0.284	0.000	0.000	0.000
<b>Total Planning &amp; Local Services</b>	<b>77.975</b>	<b>75.981</b>	<b>84.284</b>	<b>8.303</b>	<b>7.980</b>	<b>0.323</b>

## NOTES - Year End Variances of £0.250 million or more

The main reason for the forecast position for the Planning and Local Services Directorate is outlined below:

- a. Neighbourhood Services is forecast to overspend by £0.078 million. The costs associated with emergency works and the ongoing recovery from Storm Arwen is forecast to cost £0.413 million. This is partly offset from the settlement of a longstanding insurance claim following the fire at the Cowpen Crematorium in 2015. The final settlement received is £0.206 million. In addition, income from waste fees and charges is anticipated to exceed the budget.
- b. The Waste PFI budget is forecast to overspend by £0.450 million. This is based partly on a number of assumptions linked to Covid-19 and its impact on waste. As more people are still working from home, it has changed the landscape of waste habits and increased kerbside waste collection tonnages and has also had impacts on HWRC recycling and kerbside recycling performance levels. Some of the Covid-19 related impacts affect the payments made to the Waste PFI contractor and these impacts are currently the subject of contractual discussions. In addition, the forecast includes potential additional costs in relation to a claim for exceptional insurance premiums received from the PFI contractor. Discussions are ongoing with the contractor and settlement has not yet been reached over these matters.
- c. Technical Services is forecast to overspend by £7.150 million mainly due to:
  - i. Highways is forecast to overspend by £7.458 million. This is largely in relation to the estimated

costs of £2.043 million dealing with the consequences of Storm Arwen and making the network safe, with these clean-up and recovery activities expected to continue through to the end of March 2022. This includes work to remove debris from footways and carriageways, clearance of gullies, the deployment of road sweeping teams and to repair damage to the network. This total includes £0.282 million of Storm Arwen repair activities which are capital in nature and which it is recommended that a new scheme be added to the capital programme funded by a revenue contribution. The remainder of the overspend in Highways is due to the use of private contractors covering for staff sickness, additional pothole repairs and a shortfall in income from EV charging;

The overspend includes provision to increase the Severe Weather reserve by £5.000 million which will provide the Council with the resilience to fund future highways repairs following severe weather conditions. This is in accordance with the Department for Transport's recommendation that local highways authorities ensure they retain a contingency for repairing damage to local highways and associated assets caused by extreme weather. The existing £2.500 million in the reserve has been earmarked to contribute to the funding of the repairs to the Todstead Landslip which is included in the proposed Capital Programme 2022-2026.

- iii. A forecast overspend in home to school transport of £0.500 million as a result of a combination of factors. Operators who were successful in previous procurements have now upgraded vehicles to the required Euro 5 engine standards, which means that full contract rates are now being paid rather than the previous reduced rate. There are also issues around fulfilment of contracts due to driver shortages, with operators returning contracts and price increases when having to retender routes and contracts. As a result, fourteen contracts have been retendered and a number of new contracts issued due to the approval of late school transport applications: and,
- iv. This is partly offset through additional income, mainly from a forecast overachievement of car parking fees and fines of £0.425 million and a forecast over recovery of £0.300 million on Streetworks Permit Income in part due to significant broadband works in the southeast of the County which will not continue in the longer term.
- d. Planning is forecast to overspend by £0.647 million mainly due to:
  - i. A forecast underachievement of planning fee income of £0.400 million. The budget was increased by £0.400 million as part of the 2021-22 budget setting process in anticipation of an increase to the national planning fee structure. The Planning Bill proposing the change has been put on hold and therefore it is not anticipated that this saving will be achieved in the current financial year. The Council is working collaboratively with other North East Council's to approach the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities for an update on the position.
  - ii. There was £0.110 million grant funding for strategic planning identified as part of the 2021-22 budget setting process which is now unlikely to be received. However, alternative funding opportunities are being explored as part of ongoing discussions with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities regarding joint working and support arrangements. In addition, there is an £0.080 million forecast underachievement of income from Planning Performance Agreements as uptake of the scheme has been slower than anticipated: and,
  - iii. The forecast position assumes the transfer to reserves of £0.425 million in relation to the Review of the Local Plan and £0.085 million for a Gypsy and Local Travellers Plan. These areas of work have been delayed whilst the Local Plan is formally adopted, this is currently in the final stages and



expected to be adopted imminently.

Note - The difference between the figures shown in the table and the explanations above consist of a number of minor variations within each area.

## Forecast Revenue Outturn - Detailed budget summary by Service

## Service: Public Health &amp; Community Services

Summary by Service	2020-21 Outturn	Budget	Forecast Outturn	Variance	Variance BAU	Variance Covid-19
Service	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Housing General Fund	0.921	0.801	1.041	0.240	0.240	0.000
Public Protection	2.559	3.079	2.721	(0.358)	(0.605)	0.247
<b>Total Public Health &amp; Community Services</b>	<b>3.480</b>	<b>3.880</b>	<b>3.762</b>	<b>(0.118)</b>	<b>(0.365)</b>	<b>0.247</b>

## NOTES - Year End Variances of £0.250 million or more

The main reasons for the forecast position for the Public Health & Community Services Directorate are outlined below:

- a. Housing is forecast to overspend by £0.240 million mainly due to Northumbrian Water primary agency fee income being retained within the HRA to meet potential debt liability and administrative costs following the extension of water rate collection to southeast area tenants and income from enhanced trading activity and private sector landlord accreditation is not expected to be received.
- b. Public Protection is forecast to underspend by £0.358 million, mainly due to an underspend on salaries of £0.677 million due to delays in recruitment and staff turnover, offset by an anticipated shortfall in licensing income of £0.222 million resulting from the loss of business arising from the impact of Covid-19. There are also overspends relating to vehicles and travel (£0.042 million) and a revenue contribution to capital (£0.065 million) for the replacement of noise monitoring equipment.

Note - The difference between the figures shown in the table and the explanations above consist of a number of minor variations within each area.

## Forecast Revenue Outturn - Detailed budget summary by Service

## Service: Public Health &amp; Community Services - Public Health

Summary by Service	2020-21 Outturn	Budget	Forecast Outturn	Variance	Variance BAU	Variance Covid-19
Service	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Staffing and Support Costs	0.896	1.443	0.613	(0.830)	(0.830)	0.000
Stop Smoking Initiatives	0.674	0.520	0.445	(0.075)	(0.075)	0.000
Drug & Alcohol Services	3.615	3.647	3.570	(0.077)	(0.077)	0.000
Sexual Health Services	1.936	1.872	1.826	(0.046)	(0.046)	0.000
0-19 Public Health Services	6.265	6.416	6.575	0.159	0.159	0.000
Other Health Initiatives	3.714	3.164	3.459	0.295	0.295	0.000
<b>Total Public Health &amp; Community Services</b>	<b>17.100</b>	<b>17.062</b>	<b>16.488</b>	<b>(0.574)</b>	<b>(0.574)</b>	<b>0.000</b>

## NOTES

- a. The Council's Public Health service will receive grant funding of £16.891 million in 2021-22. This funding is ring-fenced for the provision of services to improve the health of the local population and reduce health inequalities.
- b. Public Health England has created the Adult Weight Management Services Grant which is ring-fenced to support the commissioning of adult behavioural management services during 2021-22. The Council will receive an allocation of £0.171 million which is non-recurrent.
- c. The terms of the main Public Health grant allow unspent allocations to be carried over into the next financial year. Public Health carried forward a reserve of £4.649 million to financial year 2021-22. There are no plans at present to utilise the Public Health reserve in 2021-22.
- d. Public Health staff continue to support the Council's response to Covid-19 and 66% of their pay costs are being funded from the Contain Outbreak Management Fund during 2021-22. The staffing underspend will be used during the year to support and maintain public health activities within Children's services.
- e. A reduced level of demand led services primarily because of social distancing requirements and non-essential services being put on hold has resulted in a £0.350 million underspend.
- f. The previously commissioned Health Improvement and Stop Smoking services have been brought back in-house with effect from 1 October 2021. It is anticipated that this will generate in-year efficiencies of £0.200 million against these budgets.

## Forecast Revenue Outturn - Detailed budget summary by Service

## Service: Public Health &amp; Community Services - Housing Revenue Account

Summary by Service	2020-21 Outturn	Budget	Forecast Outturn	Variance	Variance BAU	Variance Covid-19
Service	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Housing Management	5.941	6.502	6.239	(0.263)	(0.263)	0.000
Housing Special	0.620	0.645	0.744	0.099	0.075	0.024
Repairs and Maintenance	7.595	8.026	8.265	0.239	0.090	0.149
Housing Capital Works	0.747	0.515	0.516	0.001	0.001	0.000
Other HRA Services	13.080	13.444	13.495	0.051	0.051	0.000
HRA Income	(29.468)	(29.748)	(29.977)	(0.229)	(0.229)	0.000
<b>Total HRA Expenditure &amp; Income</b>	<b>(1.485)</b>	<b>(0.616)</b>	<b>(0.718)</b>	<b>(0.102)</b>	<b>(0.275)</b>	<b>0.173</b>

## NOTES - Year End Variances of £0.250 million or more

The main reasons for the forecast variance for the Housing Revenue Account are as follows:

- a. Housing Management is forecast to be underspent by £0.263 million. This mainly relates to staffing budgets for part year vacancies as well as underspends on a number of smaller budgets including travel, advertising and furniture.
- b. Repairs and Maintenance is forecast to overspend by £0.239 million. This mainly relates to the costs of employing agency staff to clear the backlog of gas servicing as a result of Covid-19.
- c. Other HRA Services is forecast to overspend by £0.051 million. The main reasons for this are:
  - i. Depreciation charges are estimated to be £0.285 million overspent due to the increase in the discount factor applied following the 2019-20 audit. Northumberland's stock is now valued at the regional discount rate of 44% rather than 42%;
  - ii. Interest payable on loans is forecast to be £0.134 million overspent and interest received on balances underachieved by £0.064 million; and,
  - iii. The income from NWL for the collection of water rates is anticipated to exceed the budget by £0.383 million. The fee for 2021-22 was renegotiated to mitigate the risk on the HRA for non-collection. To date there is no evidence to suggest that there will be an increase required to the provision for bad debts, this figure also includes reimbursement for void properties.
- d. HRA Income is forecast to overachieve by £0.229 million mainly due to increased dwelling rental income. The budgeted void rate was increased in 2021-22 to reflect the rates seen in 2020-21

which included the effects of Covid-19 and long-term voids including hard to let properties.

Note - The difference between the figures shown in the table and the explanations above consist of a number of minor variations within each area.

## Forecast Revenue Outturn - Detailed budget summary by Service

## Service: Regeneration

Summary by Service	2020-21 Outturn	Budget	Forecast Outturn	Variance	Variance BAU	Variance Covid-19
Service	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Economy & Regeneration	1.929	2.153	1.900	(0.253)	(0.253)	0.000
Executive Director of Regeneration, Commercial & Economy	0.283	0.031	0.073	0.042	0.042	0.000
Climate Change	0.000	0.139	0.139	0.000	0.000	0.000
<b>Total Regeneration</b>	<b>2.212</b>	<b>2.323</b>	<b>2.112</b>	<b>(0.211)</b>	<b>(0.211)</b>	<b>0.000</b>

## NOTES - Year End Variances of £0.250 million or more

The main reason for the forecast position for the Regeneration Service is outlined below:

- a. Concessionary Travel is forecast to underspend by £0.260 million. There is a recurring underspend from 2020-21 as a result of continuing to pay operators at pre-pandemic levels. A regional review of the provision of supported services is underway and passenger behaviour in the longer term following the easing of restrictions cannot yet be predicted.

Note - The difference between the figures shown in the table and the explanations above consist of a number of minor variations within each area.

## Forecast Revenue Outturn - Detailed budget summary by Service

## Service: Other Corporate Expenditure and Income

Summary by Service	2020-21 Outturn	Budget	Forecast Outturn	Variance	Variance BAU	Variance Covid-19
Service	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Corporate Items	26.170	38.314	30.428	(7.886)	0.624	(8.510)
Treasury Management	(25.501)	(22.960)	(22.860)	0.100	0.100	0.000
Capital Financing	36.665	8.684	8.184	(0.500)	(0.500)	0.000
Corporate Funding	(400.051)	(344.076)	(343.150)	0.926	0.000	0.926
<b>Total Other Corporate Expenditure &amp; Income</b>	<b>(362.717)</b>	<b>(320.038)</b>	<b>(327.398)</b>	<b>(7.360)</b>	<b>0.224</b>	<b>(7.584)</b>

## NOTES - Year End Variances of £0.250 million or more

The main reason for the forecast position for Other Corporate Expenditure and Income is outlined below:

- a. Corporate Items is forecast to underspend by £7.886 million mainly due to:
  - i. Covid-19 grant funding of £8.510 million which will be utilised to offset the Covid-19 pressures realised within the service budgets; and,
  - ii. £0.560 million overspend due to a corporate savings target which will not be delivered in year.
- b. Capital Financing is forecast to underspend by £0.500 million due to:
  - i. A £0.189 million underspend on interest payable. This is as a result of actual borrowing levels being lower than originally forecast, due to reprofiling of the Capital Programme, and actual interest rates payable on the borrowing undertaken being lower than budgeted; and,
  - ii. A £0.311 million underspend on the Minimum Revenue Provision in relation to the repayment of borrowing.
- c. Corporate Funding is forecast overspend by £0.926 million due to:
  - i. A recharge from the Invest to Save Reserve of £1.196 million will not be utilised as the Improvement and Innovation team has undertaken work in relation to Covid-19 and the cost of the service will be charged against the government funding received; and,
  - ii. £0.270 million is expected to be received from the sales, fees and charges compensation scheme.

Note - The difference between the figures shown in the table and the explanations above consist of a number of minor variations within each area.



<b>Key Capital Movements by Service</b>
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<b>Service: Adult Social Care and Commissioning – Forecast variance (£0.225) million</b>
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Summary by Project	Under/ Overspend	Reprofiling
	£m	£m
Person Centred Care Information System	-	(0.225)
<b>Total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(0.225)</b>

<b>NOTES - Year End Variances of £0.250 million or more</b>
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There are no significant variances to report.
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Service: Children's Services – Forecast variance (£4.115) million		
Summary by Project	Under/ Overspend	Reprofiling
	£m	£m
Ashington Academy	0.004	-
Wise Academy Trust – Haltwhistle Schools	0.210	-
Ponteland Secondary School & Leisure Centre	0.216	-
Special Provisions Capital Fund	0.008	-
Schools Building Programme (SCIP)	-	(2.000)
Mobile Classroom Replacement Programme	-	(0.407)
Port of Blyth – Welding and Fabrication Skills Centre	-	(1.061)
Berwick Partnership of Schools	-	(0.500)
Schools Reorganisation West	-	(0.385)
Children's Homes Provision	-	(0.200)
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.438</b>	<b>(4.553)</b>

#### NOTES - Year End Variances of £0.250 million or more

The main reason for the forecast variance for Children's Services are outlined below:

- a. Schools Building Programme (SCIP) – Works in relation to the 2021-22 programme have been impacted by Covid-19. Some schemes require further condition surveys and feasibility studies to be completed prior to the full estimated costs being identified. Some of the works are likely to slip into 2022-23.
- b. Mobile Classroom Replacement Programme – Initial design work of the programme has commenced and work at Corbridge Middle School is largely complete with the remaining projects expected to be completed by the summer term.
- c. Port of Blyth – Welding and Fabrication Skills Centre – A delay in the tendering process and issues surrounding the lease agreement will result in only the design work being completed before year end with an anticipated completion date of September 2022.
- d. Berwick Partnership of Schools – It is unlikely work will progress on the scheme in the current financial year.
- e. Schools Reorganisation West - Whilst the majority of the work is complete there have been land/site ownerships issues at Bellingham Middle School that have become known, and work cannot progress until this matter is resolved. Therefore, it is now likely that the work will slip into 2022-23.

Service: Communities and Business Development – Forecast variance £0.042 million		
Summary by Project	Under/ Overspend	Reprofiling
	£m	£m
Blyth Sports Centre	0.042	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.042</b>	<b>-</b>

NOTES - Year End Variances of £0.250 million or more
There are no significant variances to report.

Service: Finance – Forecast variance (£9.957) million		
Summary by Project	Under/ Overspend	Reprofiling
	£m	£m
Contingency for Grant Funded Projects	(1.155)	-
Loans to Third Parties	-	(6.287)
Property Stewardship Fund:		
– Powburn Depot Roof	-	(0.060)
– Public Toilet Refurbishment	(0.050)	(0.100)
Leisure Essential Remedials:		
– Essential Remedials	0.093	-
– Concordia Air Handling Units	(0.141)	-
– Wentworth Pool Room	0.048	-
County Hall Refurbishment	-	(0.600)
Hexham Tyne Mills Depot	-	(0.150)
Alnwick Lindisfarne Site	-	(0.200)
Holy Island and Seahouses Public Toilet Refurbishment	0.050	-
Other Property Schemes	0.016	-
CISCO Infrastructure	-	(0.100)
Community Broadband	-	(1.321)
<b>Total</b>	<b>(1.139)</b>	<b>(8.818)</b>

#### NOTES - Year End Variances of £0.250 million or more

The main reasons for the forecast variance for Finance are outlined below:

- a. Contingency for Grant Funded Projects – No projects have been proposed to date in the current financial year that require the use of this funding.
- b. Loans to Third Parties – A review of the requirements for the current financial year has been undertaken. The full budget allocation will not be required in the current financial year due to delays on projects due to the impact of Covid-19 and will require reprofiling into 2022-23.
- c. County Hall Refurbishment – Due to delivery delays on certain materials the Front of House works are now expected to be completed in April 2022.
- d. Community Broadband - the planned voucher scheme was instead funded through Borderland funding which was available for the current year. The project will be fully spent in 2022-23 and will be used to continue the voucher scheme across Northumberland.

Service: Planning and Local Services – forecast variance (£5.414) million		
Summary by Project	Under/ Overspend	Reprofiling
Project	£m	£m
FCERM schemes	0.008	-
Local Transport Plan	(0.650)	(0.900)
Union Chain Bridge	0.650	-
Highways Maintenance Investment in U and C Roads and Footpaths	-	(0.037)
New DfT Challenge Fund Support – Steel Structures	-	(2.500)
Ponteland Broadway and Callerton Lane	-	(0.081)
Salt Barns	-	(0.103)
Cramlington Section 106 Improvements	-	(0.383)
New Hartley Section 106 Improvements	-	(0.050)
Car Parks	-	(0.578)
Chathill Surface Water Scheme	-	(0.113)
Lynemouth Bay Landfill Encapsulation	-	(0.348)
Ovingham Surface Water	-	(0.040)
Hepscott Flood Alleviation Scheme	-	(0.050)
Red Row Flood Alleviation Scheme	-	(0.043)
Otterburn Surface Water	-	(0.048)
Country Parks Improvement Programme	0.022	-
Milburn Park Play Area (Parks Enhancement Programme)	-	(0.050)
England Coast Path (Bamburgh to Scottish Borders)	-	(0.120)
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.030</b>	<b>(5.444)</b>

#### NOTES - Year End Variances of £0.250 million or more

The main reasons for the forecast variance for Planning and Local Services are outlined below:

- a. Local Transport Plan – Works have been delayed due to disruption caused by Storm Arwen, co-ordination with other works and the requirement to obtain approvals from third parties. The budget is committed against schemes which will now be delivered in 2022-23. The underspend relates to

the unallocated contingency that is being used to fund part of the Council's share of the increased costs at Union Chain Bridge.

- b. Union Chain Bridge – It should be noted the scheme is continuing to progress and is not envisaged to be completed until late spring 2022-23 which will result in an increase in overall costs, the forecast of which is currently being assessed along with consideration of mitigation measures to limit the additional resource that will be required. Any cost increases will be shared equally between NCC and Scottish Borders Council as per the signed partnership agreement. It is assumed that the LTP will fund the Council's share.
- c. Department for Transport Challenge Fund Support – Steel Structures – Schemes are currently out to tender with works due to commence in 2022-23. In addition, a scheme due to commence in the current financial year has been delayed due the contractor entering administration prior to any works commencing on site.
- d. Cramlington Section 106 Improvements – The project is yet to commence with work now expected to be delivered in 2022-23.
- e. Car Parks – The programme of works is progressing with Morpeth Goosehill and Amble Car parks with works running into 2022-23. The new 250-space long-stay car park being developed off Alemouth Road, Hexham is expected to be completed at the end of March/beginning of April with payment made to the developer on completion.
- f. Lynemouth Bay Landfill Encapsulation Works - Scheme progressing on a phased approach using NCC funds only. Anticipated commencement on site for main works is expected to be May 2022 dependent on receiving the local enforcement position from the Environment Agency.

Service: Public Health and Community Services – forecast variance (£2.477) million		
Summary by Project	Under/ Overspend	Reprofiling
Project	£m	£m
Major Repairs Reserve	-	(1.321)
Green Homes – Social Housing	-	(1.156)
<b>Total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(2.477)</b>

#### NOTES - Year End Variances of £0.250 million or more

The main reasons for the forecast variance for Public Health and Community Services are outlined below:

- a. HRA Major Repairs Reserve – Delivery of the programme has been delayed due to longer preparation time being required and access to materials as a result of Covid-19.
- b. Green Homes – Social Housing – Approval was received to deliver energy efficient improvements to 140 dwellings with the programme expected to conclude in 2022-23. A request has been made to the funder to extend the eligible period for the grant.



Service: Regeneration – forecast variance (£5.267) million		
Summary by Project	Under/ Overspend	Reprofiling
	£m	£m
County Hall Solar Car Port	-	(0.168)
Climate Change Capital Fund	-	(0.054)
Blyth Sports Centre Solar PV	-	(0.227)
Alnwick Lindisfarne Solar PV	-	(0.033)
Sustainable Warmth Grant (LAD 2)		(2.114)
Green Homes – Private Sector Housing	-	(0.354)
Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure	-	(0.500)
Blyth Future High Street Fund	-	(0.080)
Hexham HAZ	-	(0.342)
Ad Gefrin	0.600	-
Borderlands – Berwick Maltings	-	(0.842)
Rural Business Growth Fund	-	(0.329)
Strategic Energy Site	(0.752)	-
Restoring your Railway	(0.250)	-
Rural Growth Network Local Growth Fund	0.178	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>(0.224)</b>	<b>(5.043)</b>

#### NOTES - Year End Variances of £0.250 million or more

The main reasons for the forecast variance for Regeneration are outlined below:

- Sustainable Warmth Grant (LAD 2) – Minimal expenditure is now expected in the current financial year. All expenditure was originally due to be incurred by 31 March in line with the grant conditions. However, this has now been extended to 30 June allowing more time to incur the works expenditure.
- Green Homes – Private Sector Housing – Approval was received to deliver 200 energy efficiency measures in owner-occupied sector. Work to the value of £0.990 million has been completed to date with a small number of installations expected to slip into 2022-23.
- Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure – No expenditure is expected to be incurred in the current financial year. A cycle improvement scheme at Waterloo Road, Blyth was recently approved using a mixture of Department for Transport Active Travel Fund Grant and this

funding is to enable cycling and walking improvements. NCC's contribution will not be utilised until 2022-23.

- d. Hexham HAZ – The uptake of grants for the scheme has been slow as businesses are reluctant to commit to their required match funding in the present climate due to uncertainty around the future shopping habits of individuals as a result of Covid-19. However, Public Realm works are commencing within the town, but any unspent grant will be returned to the funder with the Council having the opportunity to rebid for it.
- e. Borderlands – Berwick Maltings – The scheme is currently being reviewed as part of the Borderlands refresh with it now expected to commence in 2022-23.
- f. Rural Business Growth Fund - Based on current forecasts it is anticipated £0.433 million of grants will be issued in the current financial year. This forecast depends on external applicants submitting claims in line with the expenditure profiles previously submitted.
- g. Ad Gefrin – A contribution of £0.600 million was included in the Council's 2021-22 MTFP for the Ad Gefrin Distillery and Visitor Centre. This was subsequently reprofiled in the Financial Performance 2021-22 – Position at the end of June 2021 report to Cabinet (7 September 2021) into 2022-23 as expenditure was not expected to reach the trigger point for the payment to be made in the current financial year. However, expenditure has accelerated since then and it is now expected the payment will be required to be made in the current financial year.
- h. Strategic Energy Site - The site was acquired in April 2021 with all transactions now processed resulting in an underspend against the allocated budget.
- i. Restoring your Railway – The Council was unsuccessful in attracting Government funding for this project. If a suitable funding stream can be identified in the future then a proposal will be presented to Cabinet seeking funding to be approved in the Council's budget.

### Items approved from the Council's Contingency – October to December 2021

The following items have been approved from the Council's contingency during October to December 2021.

Recurrent Funding	2021-22	2022-23
	£	£
Legal Services Restructure	35,610	71,090
<b>Total amount drawn from Contingency recurrently</b>	<b>35,610</b>	<b>71,090</b>
Realignment of HRA Recharge	(109,860)	-
<b>Net amount drawn from Contingency recurrently</b>	<b>(74,250)</b>	<b>71,090</b>

Non-Recurrent Funding	2021-22	2022-23
	£	£
Staff rewards – vouchers and donations	75,000	-
Senior Manager Programme Lead	31,540	-
Outreach workers – April to September	34,820	-
Cost of interim management structure	190,310	135,930
Penna review for senior management structure	29,710	-
AP Oxygen finance scheme	65,000	-
<b>Total amount drawn from Contingency non-recurrently</b>	<b>426,380</b>	<b>135,930</b>
Reversal of bus partnership – external funding now received	(204,700)	-
<b>Net amount drawn from Contingency non-recurrently</b>	<b>111,820</b>	<b>135,930</b>

## Movement in the Council's Reserves

	Opening Balance at 1 April 2021*	Movement in Reserve	Commitments	Forecast Closing Balance at 31 March 2022
	£m	£m	£m	£m
General Reserves/Balances				
General Fund	(70.469)	-	(4.401)	(74.870)
<b>Total General Reserve</b>	<b>(70.469)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(4.401)</b>	<b>(74.870)</b>
Ring-Fenced Reserves/Balances				
Housing Revenue Account	(28.890)	-	(0.706)	(29.596)
Major Repairs (HRA)	(8.607)	-	1.046	(7.561)
HRA Capital Investment	(3.108)	-	0.779	(2.329)
<b>Total Earmarked HRA Reserves</b>	<b>(40.605)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1.119</b>	<b>(39.486)</b>
Specific Reserves/Balances				
Capital Grants Unapplied	(43.831)	-	15.001	(28.830)
Capital Receipts	-	-	-	-
Capital Receipts - HRA	(4.025)	-	0.924	(3.101)
<b>Total Specific Reserves/Balances</b>	<b>(47.856)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>15.925</b>	<b>(31.931)</b>

## Appendix R

	Opening Balance at 1 April 2021*	Movement in Reserve	Commitments	Forecast Closing Balance at 31 March 2022
	£m	£m	£m	£m
Earmarked Reserves				
Balances held by Schools	(5.498)	5.378	(5.421)	(5.541)
Business Recovery Reserve	(2.322)	-	-	(2.322)
Cessation of NHS Partnership Agreement	(1.500)	-	1.500	-
Collection Fund Smoothing	(26.291)	-	15.266	(11.025)
Community Led Housing	(0.829)	0.035	0.091	(0.703)
Contain Outbreak Management	-	-	(0.673)	(0.673)
Council Commissioned Services	(11.100)	1.281	9.819	-
Council Transformation Fund	(7.466)	(10.486)	0.948	(17.004)
Dedicated Schools Grant	(0.898)	(0.170)	(1.941)	(3.009)
Economy & Regeneration Investments	(0.420)	-	0.061	(0.359)
Energy Masterplan	(1.067)	-	0.534	(0.533)
Estates Rationalisation	(8.677)	0.836	1.001	(6.840)
EU Exit Funding	(0.315)	0.315	-	-
EU Exit Funding - PP	(0.020)	0.020	-	-
Firefighters' Immediate Detriment	(0.250)	-	0.100	(0.150)
FPF Admin Grant	(0.033)	-	0.033	-
FRS HMICFRS Improvement	(0.060)	-	0.029	(0.031)
Haltwhistle Repairs Reserve	(0.015)	-	-	(0.015)
Insurance	(9.661)	-	0.500	(9.161)
Invest to Save Reserve	(10.507)	10.507	-	-
Legal Challenge	(0.637)	0.059	0.035	(0.543)
Local Authority Mortgage Scheme	(0.424)	0.424	-	-
NCC Economic Regeneration	(0.083)	(0.055)	-	(0.138)

## Appendix R

	Opening Balance at 1 April 2021*	Movement in Reserve	Commitments	Forecast Closing Balance at 31 March 2022
	£m	£m	£m	£m
Northumberland Enterprise Holdings	(0.300)	-	0.300	-
Open Spaces Maintenance Agreements	(0.065)	0.007	-	(0.058)
Planning Delivery	(0.206)	-	(0.510)	(0.716)
Problematic Empty Properties	(0.050)	-	0.006	(0.044)
Regeneration Additional Capacity Reserve	(0.304)	0.114	-	(0.190)
Regeneration Development Reserve	(1.578)	(0.104)	0.757	(0.925)
Repair and Maintenance	(0.250)	-	-	(0.250)
Restructuring Reserve	(1.000)	-	1.000	-
Revenue Grants	(19.231)	1.500	8.045	(9.686)
Rural Growth Network	(0.095)	-	0.095	-
Sealodge	(0.017)	-	-	(0.017)
School Libraries	(0.009)	-	-	(0.009)
Section 106	(7.699)	0.005	(1.205)	(8.899)
Severe Weather	(2.500)	-	(5.000)	(7.500)
Social Fund	(1.695)	-	1.066	(0.629)
Sports Development	(0.256)	-	0.046	(0.210)
Strategic Management Reserve	(49.002)	(2.041)	2.200	(48.843)
Violence Reduction	(0.030)	0.030	-	-
Winter Services	(2.000)	-	-	(2.000)
ADC Parks & Open Spaces	(0.020)	0.011	-	(0.009)
ADC Section 106	(0.050)	0.004	-	(0.046)
<b>Total Earmarked Reserves</b>	<b>(174.430)</b>	<b>7.670</b>	<b>28.682</b>	<b>(138.078)</b>
<b>Total Usable Reserves</b>	<b>(333.360)</b>	<b>7.670</b>	<b>41.325</b>	<b>(284.365)</b>

	Opening Balance at 1 April 2021*	Movement in Provision	Commitments	Forecast Closing Balance at 31 March 2022
	£m	£m	£m	£m
<b>Provisions</b>				
Redundancy Costs	(0.171)	-	0.171	-
NNDR Appeals	(7.494)	-	1.749	(5.745)
Estates Rationalisation Project	(0.577)	-	0.227	(0.350)
Compensation Claims	(0.150)	0.003	0.147	-
<b>Total Provisions</b>	<b>(8.392)</b>	<b>0.003</b>	<b>2.294</b>	<b>(6.095)</b>
<b>Total Reserves &amp; Provisions</b>	<b>(341.752)</b>	<b>7.673</b>	<b>43.619</b>	<b>(290.460)</b>

\*Provisional un-audited opening balance figure



## Virements October to December 2021

Directorate	Reason for Virement	Virement from	Virement to	£
Adult Social Care & Commissioning	2021-22 variation to the Better Care Fund	Increase Better Care Fund income	Increase Home Care budget in Commissioned Services	810,510
Adult Social Care & Commissioning	Creation of a budget for the Joint Equipment Loans Scheme following the end of the Partnership Agreement with Northumbria Health Care Trust. This service was previously commissioned therefore there was no additional cost to the Council	Adults - Commissioned Services	Adults – In-House Services	1,322,970
Adult Social Care & Commissioning	Variation to the 2021-22 staffing budgets following the end of the Partnership Agreement with Northumbria Health Care Trust. There was no additional cost to the Council from this virement.	NHCT staffing budget	NCC and TUPE staffing budget	10,042,929
Public Health & Community Services	Creation of Training budget within Repairs & Maintenance to comply with Health & Safety Regulations.	Housing Management	Repairs and Maintenance	25,000

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**CABINET****8 MARCH 2022**

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**Summary of New Capital Proposals considered by Officer Capital Strategy Group**

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**Report of:** Jan Willis, Interim Executive Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer

**Cabinet Member:** Councillor Richard Wearmouth, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services

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**1. Purpose of Report**

The following report summarises proposed amendments to the Capital Programme considered by the officer Capital Strategy Group via email on 4 February 2022.

**2. Recommendations**

Cabinet is recommended to:

**2.1 A1068 Shilbottle Road Junction Improvements:**

Approve a proposal to design and construct junction improvements at the A1068 junction in Alnwick at a total cost of £1,500,000. Funding of £143,900 has already been secured through a S106 contribution and it is proposed that the balance of £1,356,100 is initially funded through the Strategic Regeneration Projects Budget in the 2022-26 Medium Term Financial Plan. It is anticipated that this funding will then be recouped by the Council against a number of future S106 Developer Contributions associated with planning applications within the Cawledge Business Park and Lionheart Enterprise Park over the period from 2022-29 thereby unlocking the allocated employment sites within the Alnwick and Denwick Neighbourhood Plan and delivering economic growth and employment opportunities.

**2.2 Additional Funding for Willowburn GSHP Scheme:**

Approve the request for additional funding of £175,000 for the Ground Source Heat Pump project at Willowburn Leisure Centre currently on site in Alnwick to be provided from the current year contingency to support grant funded projects included in the Council's Capital Programme within the Medium Term Financial Plan.

### **2.3 Newbiggin Sports Centre Football Foundation Grant**

Accept the grant award from the Football Foundation of £250,000 and accordingly approve an increase in the overall budget provision for the Newbiggin Sports and Community Centre project from £1,605,000 to £1,855,000.

### **2.4 Corbridge Middle School 3G Pitch:**

- Accept a contribution of £450,000 from Gladman Development Ltd and £50,000 from Corbridge Middle School to fund the creation of a 3G pitch on the school site and amend the Medium Term Financial Plan accordingly.
- Agree to the scheme being delivered by the Council through the Football Foundation Framework once detailed costs have been established and full funding secured.

### **2.5 Contracts in excess of £2 million:**

Following a tender process, authorise the Council to enter into a 2-year contract for £3 million with the successful tenderer to re-roof Council-owned dwellings in line with the agreed programme of works funded through the HRA.

## **3. Links to Corporate Plan**

The Council's Capital Programme is consistent with the priorities in the Corporate Plan in particular the 'Living', 'Enjoying' and 'Thriving' priorities.

## **4. Background**

This paper summarises reports considered by the officer Capital Strategy Group on the allocation of funding within the Medium Term Plan to specific projects.

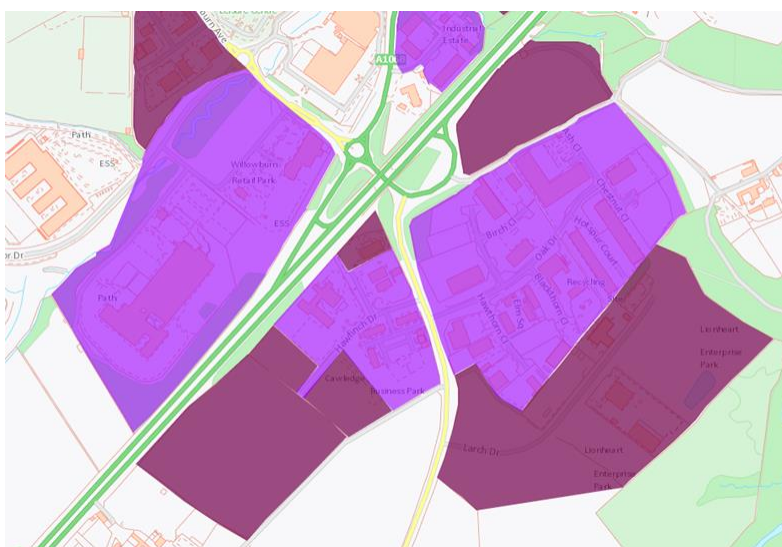
## SUMMARY OF NEW CAPITAL PROPOSALS CONSIDERED BY OFFICER CAPITAL STRATEGY GROUP VIA EMAIL ON 4 FEBRUARY 2022

### 5. A1068 Shilbottle Road Junction Improvements

- 5.1 The Group was asked to approve a proposal to design and construct junction improvements at the A1068 junction in Alnwick at a total cost of £1,500,000.

#### Key Issues

- 5.2 The A1068 Shilbottle Road junction is a simple T-junction forming part of the grade separated junction between the A1068 and the A1 Trunk Road to the south of Alnwick. Highways responsibility for the A1068 sits with Northumberland County Council and National Highways (formally Highways England) for the A1.
- 5.3 The grade separated junction comprises free-flow slip roads to the northbound and southbound A1, a roundabout junction to the west of the A1 mainline with Willowburn Avenue and the Shilbottle Road priority junction to the east.
- 5.4 Shilbottle Road connects Alnwick to the village of Shilbottle but also provides access to one of the main employment areas for Alnwick located within the Cawledge Business Park and Lionheart Enterprise Park. Expansion of these Business Parks is allocated for employment in the adopted Alnwick and Denwick Neighbourhood Plan and the emerging Northumberland Local Plan. It is estimated that 14ha of land will be likely to be built out (from a total potential area of 16.5 ha) during the plan period with the potential creation of 595 jobs as a result. Fig 1 below shows that available employment allocations to the south-east of the A1 represent a considerable proportion of the land available for inward investment/expansion space in the south of Alnwick.



*Figure 1: Employment allocations, south Alnwick*

- 5.5 The A1068 Shilbottle priority T-junction is explicitly identified as requiring mitigation during the Local Plan period 2021-2036 due to growth and as a result of allocations resultant from the Local Plan, including Cawledge Business Park and Lionheart Enterprise Park. This mitigation requires the approval of both Northumberland County Council as Local Highway Authority but also National Highways as Strategic Highway Authority due to the proximity of the A1.
- 5.6 Planning applications submitted for development in the Cawledge Business Park and Lionheart Enterprise Park (forming a part of the allocated sites) demonstrate a direct impact on this junction and as a consequence the need to expedite improvements. Proportionate contributions from the allocated sites would mean that the full funding could not be secured until later in the plan period and therefore consequentially there are three outcomes:
- The A1068 Shilbottle Road junction will operate over capacity in this intervening period. This would be unacceptable from an NCC Highway Authority perspective as it would compromise both road safety and the free flow of traffic.
  - The first application generating traffic flows in the relevant area following the Local Plan work on infrastructure modelling would be required to accommodate the full cost of junction improvement. This would be a barrier to firms moving to, starting up or expanding on the two business parks.
  - The Local Planning Authority would be placed in a position of refusing planning applications on an allocated site for economic growth if full contributions could not be secured.
- 5.7 As mentioned above, the junction also adjoins the A1. On this basis, National Highways (formally Highways England) have placed holding objections on the Cawledge Business Park and Lionheart Enterprise Park applications. This is due to the current lack of clarity on the type of junction improvement that will occur and the timing of it. Whilst the local plan evidence base has identified that the junction will fail during the plan period it cannot identify when as it will be heavily influenced by the timing of applications that will directly impact upon it.
- 5.8 The scenario set out above is not atypical for unlocking development sites where there is a potential for the early developers being presented with a situation involving prohibitive initial infrastructure costs. This report therefore seeks upfront funding from the Council to secure the detailed design and construction of a mitigation scheme so that it can be demonstrated that the Council is proactively pursuing the implementation of the mitigation

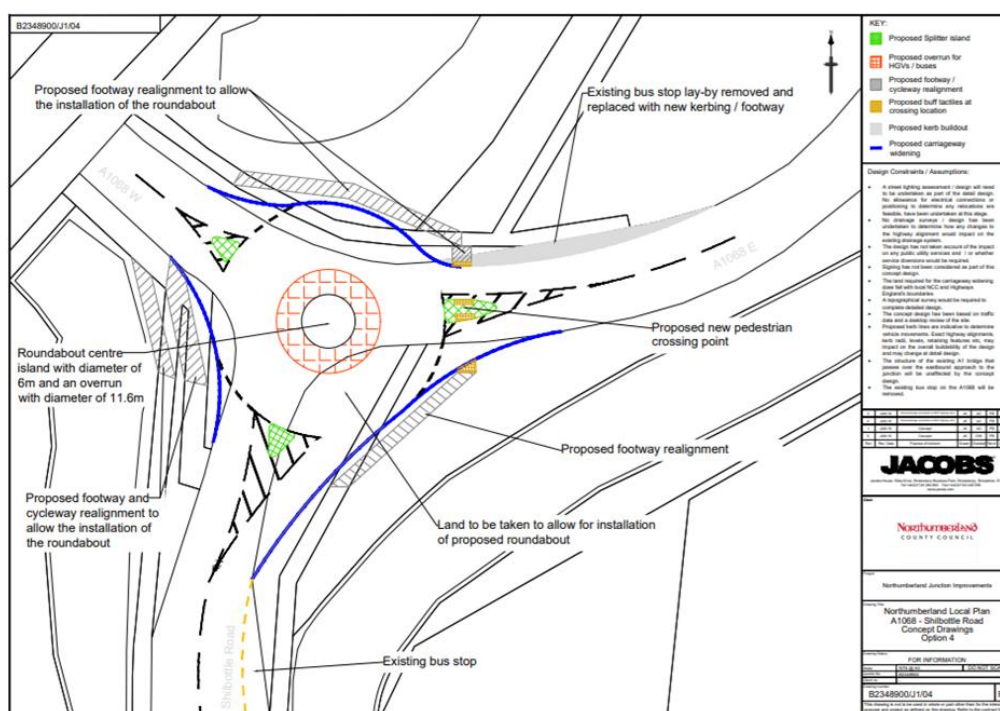
measures. It is understood that with co-operative agreement on the junction design that National Highways will lift their holding notices to allow the determination of the Cawledge Business Park and Lionheart Enterprise Park applications.

- 5.9 In the absence of a front-funded strategy, planning applications will remain undetermined or with restrictive conditions preventing occupation until such time as the junction improvement occurs. This may result in businesses withdrawing from Northumberland and relocating elsewhere which would have a detrimental impact on supporting businesses and economic growth within the County.
- 5.10 The level of funding requested is £1,356,100. Developments currently in planning will be required to make suitable contributions towards the scheme once a full costing has been produced. Any applications that impact on this junction will also need to make a proportional impact payment based on the full costing. It is anticipated that development within the plan period 2022 - 2029 will recover the cost of the works. These contributions will be secured via s106 legal agreements and for financial planning purposes are estimated to be received in equal annual payments across the plan period.
- 5.11 A secured S106 initial payment of £143,900 is anticipated to be received from the applicant of the McDonald's development in lieu of physical mitigation during Q4 of 2021/2022.
- 5.12 As part of the supporting evidence for the Northumberland Local Plan a County Wide Transport Assessment was undertaken considering the impacts on the County road network as a result of the allocations provided in the Local Plan. The additional traffic estimated to be generated from the allocations, in particular the allocation at the Cawledge Business Park and Lionheart Enterprise Park, indicated that the A1068 Shilbottle Road would operate over capacity with resultant queues impacting on Shilbottle Road and potentially the A1 slip-roads during the plan period.
- 5.13 Mitigation to address these impacts were presented in the Transport Assessment Mitigation Report to follow from the County Wide Transport Assessment. This mitigation was proposed on the basis to demonstrate that mitigation was possible and that this would not prevent the plan allocations being delivered. The precise nature of the mitigation was not determined under the Local Plan as employment uses have varying employment densities and that Development Planning would consider the impacts of individual applications and their impacts upon the network.
- 5.14 As mitigation is required at the junction, this is included in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan as being "Necessary" to deliver the Local Plan. If no mitigation was provided at the junction during the Plan period, then the allocations will not be delivered due to the adverse impacts upon the Local and Strategic



Highway Networks. This would then subsequently impact upon the delivery of employment opportunities and economic growth within Alnwick.

- 5.15 The preferred solution indicated in the Mitigation Report was for a roundabout junction to be implemented. The analysis of this junction demonstrated that there would be sufficient capacity to accommodate the level of traffic growth through the Local Plan period including that generated by the allocated sites. Figure 2 shows the indicative concept drawing presented in the Mitigation Report submitted with the Local Plan Document Library. The detailed design of this junction improvement may result in an alternative design being progressed.



*Figure 2: Concept Design for Roundabout Mitigation at A1068 Shilbottle Road Junction*

- 5.16 This proposal was not put forward as part of the budget setting process for inclusion in the MTFP as the scheme was identified via the draft Local Plan and Infrastructure Delivery Plan. Until the adoption of the Local Plan this approach would have lacked strategic cohesion and understanding.
- 5.17 It is anticipated that design work will commence early in 2022-23 with construction of the scheme being completed in 2023-24. The estimated spend profile is therefore £550,000 in 2022-23 and £950,000 in 2023-24.
- 5.18 There is some risk that the advance funding for the scheme is not recovered from planning obligations within the plan period but the works are being undertaken to support the delivery of the Local Plan. Implementing the works

early in the Plan period will allow future applications to benefit from the early implementation reducing barriers to economic growth. In the event that sufficient 106 contributions are not forthcoming, then the Council would have to cover any shortfall through the Strategic Regeneration Projects Budget.

- 5.19 The refinement of the design of the works and the costs associated with implementing the scheme as detailed design is progressed has the potential to reduce the cost of the scheme.

### **CSG Recommendation**

- 5.20 The Group supported the proposal including the request to provide advance funding of £1,356,100, from the Strategic Regeneration Projects Budget which will then be reimbursable through future S106 Contributions. The Group recommends Cabinet to approve the proposal which will secure the early design and construction of mitigation measures at the A1068 Shilbottle Road junction and unlock the allocated employment sites within Alnwick and Denwick Neighbourhood Plan delivering economic growth and employment opportunities.

## **6. Additional Funding for Willowburn GSHP Scheme**

- 6.1 The Group was asked to approve additional funding of £175,000 for the GSHP scheme currently on site at Willowburn Leisure Centre.

### **Background**

- 6.2 Following the approval of the Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund bid, which was approved through the Capital Strategy Group route at Cabinet in March 2021, delivery of the projects commenced in summer 2021. Four of the six sites are complete with the remaining two currently in delivery.
- 6.3 During the delivery of Willowburn Leisure Centre the borehole drilling has encountered artesian water, a body of water trapped underground at significant pressure. While this does not impair the ability of the scheme to continue it does require additional funding for protective casings within the bore holes and will extend the length of time that the installation team is on site by 3 months.
- 6.4 The implementation of Ground Source Heat Pump technology into Willowburn Leisure Centre will represent a 218tCO<sub>2</sub> reduction in annual carbon emissions. As NCC's 7th largest carbon emitting building the impact of low carbon heating is significant for the whole estate.
- 6.5 Geological surveys were reviewed where available and these displayed no historic high pressure artesian water. When a borehole is drilled the findings

are logged in a national database that helps all future drilling. In the case of Willowburn the existing data was not particularly close to the site so reasonable assumptions had to be made based on drilling in the surrounding areas which had not detected artesian water. The drilling logs from this site will help any future work in the area and as more of this work is undertaken in the county it will improve national information and understanding.

- 6.6 The build is currently projected to overshoot its existing budget allowance of £1.76m by £175,000 due to the impact of artesian water. Geological surveys were carried out in advance as described above, but the presence of artesian water was not detected until the first borehole was drilled. Twelve boreholes have currently been drilled out of the 62 required for the heat demand on site and artesian water has been present in all twelve. As such the budget increase requested assumes that artesian water will be present in the remainder. If this is not the case then any reduction in cost can be reported as an underspend.
- 6.7 It should be noted that the climate change team has sought additional financial support from Salix, the administering body, but has been told that no increase in budget will be granted.
- 6.8 The total cost of the scheme will now increase to £1,934,000 with £1,759,000 funded externally through Salix and £175,000 funded by the Council. The anticipated completion date for the project has been revised to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2022 which has been approved by Salix.

### **CSG Recommendation**

- 6.9 The Group supported the request for additional funding of £175,000 and recommends Cabinet to approve the revised budget with the increase to be funded from the current year's contingency for grant funded projects included in the Medium Term Financial Plan.

## **7. Newbiggin Sports Centre Football Foundation Grant**

- 7.1 The Group were requested to approve a grant award of £250,000 for improvement work to the playing pitches at Newbiggin Sports Centre.

### **Background**

- 7.2 Approval was given by Cabinet in March 2020 for the allocation of £1,505,000 in the Council's Capital Programme for the partial refurbishment and remodelling of the Newbiggin Sports and Community Centre. The scope of works includes improvements to the library, creation of a community café, enlargement of changing rooms, refurbishment of internal sports facilities and general redecoration throughout the building. Following further design work, the cost estimate of the project increased from £1,505,000 to £1,605,000 and

this increase is now included in the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan for 2022-26.

- 7.3 The £1,605,000 cost related to the internal works only and did not include any improvements to external playing pitches. Whilst included in the overall project scope of works these playing pitch improvements were to be funded by the Football Foundation. A grant application has now been approved by the Football Foundation which agrees to a contribution of £250,000 which matches the cost of improvement works being undertaken to changing room facilities within the sports centre building.

### **CSG Recommendation**

- 7.4 The Group supported the grant award and recommends Cabinet to accept the Football Foundation Grant of £250,000 and increase the project budget within the Medium Term Financial Plan to £1,855,000.

## **8. Corbridge Middle School 3G Pitch**

- 8.1 The Group were asked to approve the construction of a 3G pitch at Corbridge Middle School fully funded by a developer contribution and the school.

### **Background**

- 8.2 Part of the site of Corbridge Middle school owned by the council was sold to Gladman Developments in order to provide land to widen an access road to a new housing development site adjacent to the school. The land sold was a relatively small area just sufficient to allow the existing highway to be widened.
- 8.3 The loss of playing field did not require the provision of the 3G pitch as the existing pitch areas were unaffected. However, the provision of the 3G pitch was seen by the school as an additional benefit and terms for the provision of funding were negotiated with the developer to enhance the sporting provision for the school and wider community.

### **Key Issues**

- 8.4 Initial site investigations have been undertaken on the school site to confirm the viability and affordability of a 9v9 3G pitch. In summary, the site presents very little problem in terms of ground risk, and traditional techniques can be adopted for the construction of the pitch. The desk study has determined the development of the site poses negligible risk to identified receptors, and will address planning where necessary.

- 8.5 Should the affordability of the 9v9 pitch be greater than £500,000 then discussions will be held with the Football Foundation Framework regarding additional funding on the basis of a grant.
- 8.6 There will be zero cost to NCC with the governing body of the school underwriting any cost overruns. Ground investigation and early design work will be undertaken in 2021-22 at an estimated cost of £10,000 with the remaining funding of £490,000 spent in 2022-23.

**CSG Recommendation**

- 8.7 The Group supported the proposal to construct a 3G pitch at Corbridge Middle School fully funded by Gladman Developments and the school and recommends Cabinet to approve the project and amend the capital programme within the Medium Term Financial Plan accordingly.

## **Implications**

<b>Policy</b>	The capital programme is part of the Medium-Term Financial Plan 2022-26. The plan supports the Corporate Plan.
<b>Finance and value for money</b>	The report outlines proposed project allocations and amendments to the approved Capital programme. The financial implications of these proposals are outlined in the main body of the report.
<b>Legal</b>	There are no direct legal implications.
<b>Procurement</b>	In line with all other capital expenditure, the additional spend will be subject to the Council's recognised procurement procedures.
<b>Human Resources</b>	Not applicable.
<b>Property</b>	The properties affected by the proposals are identified in the main body of the report.
<b>Equalities</b> (Impact Assessment attached) Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	Not applicable.
<b>Risk Assessment</b>	The risks associated with the proposals are regarded as acceptable but these risks will continue to be reviewed up to and during implementation of the proposals. There is a specific risk with regard to the A1068 Shilbottle Road Junction project that any shortfall in future S106 contributions to fund these works would have to be picked up by the Council through the Strategic Regeneration Projects Budget.
<b>Crime &amp; Disorder</b>	There are no Crime and Disorder implications.
<b>Customer Consideration</b>	There are no Customer Considerations.
<b>Carbon reduction</b>	Carbon Reduction measures have been considered within each project.
<b>Health &amp; Wellbeing</b>	There are no Health and Wellbeing implications.
<b>Wards</b>	All wards.

**Background Papers:**

Medium Term Financial Plan 2022-26

**Report sign off:**

***Authors must ensure that officers and members have agreed the content of the report:***

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Monitoring Officer/Legal	Suki Binjal
Service Director Finance and Deputy S151 Officer	Alison Elsdon
Relevant Executive Director	Jan Willis
Chief Executive	Daljit Lally
Portfolio Holder	Richard Wearmouth

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