

# Public Document Pack



## Northumberland County Council

**Your ref:**

**Our ref:**

**Enquiries to:** Nichola Turnbull

**Email:** nichola.turnbull@northumberland.gov.uk

**Tel direct:** 01670 622617

**Date:** Tuesday, 27 July 2021

Dear Sir or Madam,

Your attendance is requested at a meeting of the **COMMUNITIES AND PLACE OSC** to be held in Committee Room 1, County Hall, Morpeth, Northumberland, NE61 2EF on **WEDNESDAY, 4 AUGUST 2021 at 10.00 AM.**

Yours faithfully

Daljit Lally  
Chief Executive

**To: Members of the Communities and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

**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 around but can be removed when seated, social distancing should be maintained, hand sanitiser used regularly and members are 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  
- 6)

Minutes of the meeting of the Communities and Place OSC held on 30 June 2021, 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 the Legal Services Manager at [monitoringofficer@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:monitoringofficer@northumberland.gov.uk). Please refer to the guidance on disclosures at the rear of this agenda letter.

#### 4. FORWARD PLAN OF CABINET DECISIONS

(Pages 7  
- 8)

To note the latest Forward Plan of key decisions. Any further changes made to the Forward Plan will be reported to the Committee.

### SCRUTINY OF CABINET REPORT

The following report will be considered by the Cabinet on 7 September 2021. The Committee's comments will be presented to the Cabinet by the Chair when it determines the report. The Committee is requested to consider issues arising from the report.

*The Cabinet Member requested to attend for the following item is Councillor Colin Horncastle, Portfolio Holder for Community Services.*

#### 5.1 Private Sector Housing Strategy 2021-2023

(Pages 9  
- 30)

To present the draft Private Sector Housing Strategy 2021-2023, providing details of the proposed strategic objectives for the Council's Private Sector Housing Service for the following three years.

### OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY REPORTS

*The Cabinet Member requested to attend for the following items is Councillor Jeff Watson, Portfolio Holder for Healthy Lives.*

- 6.1 Active Northumberland Annual Outcome Report 2020-2021** (Pages 31 - 40)  
To receive Active Northumberland's Annual Outcome Report 2020-2021.
- 6.2 Active Northumberland Annual Service Report April 2020 - April 2021** (Pages 41 - 62)  
To receive Active Northumberland's Annual Service Report April 2020 – April 2021.

## **REPORT OF THE SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATOR**

- 7. COMMUNITIES AND PLACE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME AND MONITORING REPORT** (Pages 63 - 68)

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee operates within a work programme which is agreed at the start of the Council year. The programme is reviewed at each meeting so that it can be adjusted to reflect the wishes of the Committee and take account of any changes to the latest Forward Plan (which outlines decisions to be taken by the Cabinet). The Committee is asked to review and note its work programme for the 2021/22 council year.

## **8. 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.

**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

### COMMUNITIES AND PLACE OSC

At the meeting of the **Communities and Place OSC** held at County Hall, Morpeth on Wednesday, 30 June 2021 at 10.00 am.

#### PRESENT

N Oliver (Chair) (in the Chair)

#### MEMBERS

M Mather  
G Castle  
N Morphet

E Cartie  
C Hardy  
Richardson

#### OTHER COUNCILLORS

C Horncastle

R Wearmouth

#### OFFICERS

J Dennitts-Seal  
D Feige  
R Little  
S Nicholson  
N Turnbull

Corporate Complaints Manager  
Environment and Design Team Manager  
Assistant Democratic Services Officer  
Scrutiny Co-ordinator  
Democratic Services Officer

1 member of the press and public was present.

#### 1 MEMBERSHIP AND TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Membership and Terms of Reference, as agreed by Council at the meeting on 26 May 2021, had been circulated for information.

The Chair welcomed the new Members and invited all members and officers to introduce themselves.

**RESOLVED** that the Communities & Place OSC's membership and terms of reference, as agreed by Council on 26 May 2021, be noted.

#### 2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bridgett, Gallacher, Riddle, and Robinson.

#### 3 MINUTES

Minute No. 83.1 Northumberland Sports Facility Strategy 2019-2031 & Northumberland Playing Pitch Strategy 2019-31

Councillor Horncastle, agreed to investigate a policy to exclude dogs from gated sports areas.

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the following meetings of the Communities & Place OSC, as circulated, be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair:

- a) 3 February 2021
- b) 3 March 2021

4 **FORWARD PLAN OF CABINET DECISIONS**

The Committee considered the Forward Plan of key decisions (February to May 2021). (Schedule enclosed with the signed minutes as Appendix A).

For the benefit of new Councillors, the Scrutiny Co-ordinator explained that the forward plan enabled members to consider whether they wished to review any of the matters that would be considered by Cabinet. The Chair added that the Committee were not restricted to these issues and could also ask for reports on other matters within the remit of the committee.

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

**SCRUTINY OF CABINET REPORTS**

The Committee were advised that the following reports would be considered by the Cabinet on 13 July 2021. Members were requested to comment on the proposals in the report.

5 **AONB**

The report sought approval for 25% funding for the Northumberland Coast AONB of £37,070 and North Pennines AONB of £24,926 for three years from 2021-22. (A copy of the report is attached to the signed minutes as Appendix B).

David Feige, Environment & Design Team Manager and County Ecologist, reported that contribution to the AONB Staff Units enabled the Council to discharge its obligations in terms of AONB Management Plans and its legal duty to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the AONBs, a statutory designation and responsibility.

The North Pennines AONB was located across Northumberland, Durham and Cumbria with contributions being received from the 5 local authorities whose areas fell partly within the AONB area.

A 10% increase was proposed as contributions had remained the same since 2007. This had been accepted by the other local authorities. The funding was reviewed every three years. The 25% Council contribution secured 75% funding from Defra, and in addition, the AONB team had been successful in obtaining significant project funding from other sources.

In response to a question, it was confirmed that all of the Northumberland coast was designated for various features of ecological importance, particularly the bird populations. Since 2016/17, section 106 monies obtained for coastal mitigation purposes had been used to fund a warden scheme to counteract recreational disturbance from planning applications adjacent to the coast and visitors to safeguard the most important areas from disturbance.

Councillor Horncastle, Portfolio Holder for Community Services, explained that he had been involved with the North Pennines AONB for a number of years and gave brief overview of the valuable work that they carried out which contributed to the Government and Council's green agenda. He was satisfied that the contribution made by the Council provided value for money.

Several of the members commented that a 10% increase was fair and reasonable given that contributions had not increased since 2007, particularly with increasing visitor numbers.

**RESOLVED** that, the Cabinet be advised that the Committee supported the recommendations contained in the report.

## 6 **UNREASONABLY PERSISTENT AND VEXATIOUS CONTACT POLICY**

The report sought approval to adopt an updated Unreasonably Persistent and Vexatious Contact Policy, to enable the Council to operate a fair, effective and efficient complaints process as well as reflecting good practice advocated by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman. (A copy of the report is attached to the signed minutes as Appendix C).

Richard Wearmouth, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services and Julie Dennitts-Seal, Corporate Complaints Manager presented the report.

The Corporate Complaints Manager stated that the policy would be replacing the Habitual or Vexatious Complaints Policy which had been adopted in 2010. She highlighted the following:

- The policy would enable members of the public to raise concerns and have them investigated in a timely and sensitive way whilst also protecting staff and enable them to carry out their roles.
- In a small number of cases, when an individual's conduct about their complaint becomes unreasonably persistent or vexatious, it could impede the effective functioning of the complaint procedure.
- A checklist required a number of aspects to be considered, evidence documented and demonstration of rationale against a variety actions.
- All complaints were treated on a case by case basis. It was hoped that an agreed plan of action could be mutually agreed with individuals. Implementation of proposals would be a last resort.
- Clarification was provided of the complaints process which comprised of 2 stages. If an individual remained dissatisfied, they could refer their complaint to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman who would investigate and decide whether further action was required by the Council.

Councillor Wearmouth commented that the Council welcomed feedback and agreed that issues of incompetence should be investigated. He added that the policy would likely only be applied to a few individuals.

It was noted that:

- Members of the public would not always be happy with the Council's responses to their queries and complaints, but the Committee felt that the revised policy provided the right balance in dealing with them.
- A summary of the complaints dealt with under the Unreasonably Persistent and Vexatious Contact Policy would be included within the annual customer feedback report to the Committee.
- Decisions as to whether a complainant be declared as unreasonably persistent or vexatious be made following consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder, Leader or Deputy Leader.

**RESOLVED** that, subject to the comments above, the Cabinet be advised that the Committee supported the recommendations contained in the report.

## **REPORT OF THE SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATOR**

### **7 COMMUNITIES AND PLACE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME AND MONITORING REPORT**

The Committee reviewed its work programme for the 2021/22 council year. (Report enclosed with the signed minutes as Appendix D).

The Scrutiny Co-ordinator explained the process of referrals, the difference between overview and scrutiny and the role of Chairmen's Group. The monitoring report for 2019/21 had also been included so new members were aware of matters considered by the committee in the previous 24 months. Copies of these reports could be provided on request.

He reported that a number of items listed within the work programme had been identified by the previous committee and could be reviewed and removed if no longer required.

It was noted that there were currently 5 items identified for consideration at the next meeting on 4 August 2021. It was suggested that this was too many and whether it would be practical to identify some reports 'for information' or 'read only'.

The Scrutiny Co-ordinator agreed to contact report authors to identify items which could be deferred to a later meeting. He explained that normally only a brief synopsis of a Cabinet report was available when the agenda for this committee was issued and therefore decisions were made following discussions with the Chair and Vice-Chair. He agreed to explore whether a schedule of Cabinet decisions could be circulated to members to provide assurance on how matters had been dealt with.

A query was raised regarding public transport subsidy. It was due to be considered by Cabinet at its next meeting and as a strategic transport issue was

included within the terms of reference for Corporate Services and Economic Growth OSC. The terms of reference for this committee included Public and Community Transport Network and members from rural wards were particularly interested in the matter. The Scrutiny Co-ordinator confirmed that the Chairmen's Group determined the most appropriate body to consider matters where there was an overlap of interest.

The Chair and Vice-Chair encouraged any member to contact themselves or the Scrutiny Co-ordinator with any queries or suggestions.

A member requested a report on:

- A policy to exclude dogs from gated sports areas.

The matter would be referred to the Chairmen's Group.

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

**CHAIR**.....

**DATE**.....

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# Agenda Item 4

## FORWARD PLAN OF FORTHCOMING CABINET DECISIONS AUGUST TO NOVEMBER 2021

DECISION	PROPOSED SCRUTINY DATE	CABINET DATE
<p><b>Transfer of redundant public toilet to Newbiggin Town Council</b>            To seek a resolution on the recommendation of the Local Area Council in response to a petition on the proposed transfer of a redundant public toilet building to Newbiggin Town Council            (J. Riddle/G. Gavin – 07500127242)</p>	N/A	7 September 2021
<p><b>Draft Private Housing Sector Strategy 2020-23</b>            The report provides Members with the draft Private Sector Housing Strategy 2020-2023 for review and agreement.            (C. Horncastle/J. Stewart 01670 623076 / 07771 974 112)</p>	C&P OSC 4 August 2021	7 September 2021
<p><b>Enterprise Zone – NEP1 – Investor Proposal</b>            The purpose of this report is to enable the Cabinet to make a decision in respect of entering into the proposed project with Investor A which includes the significant inward investment and entering into a long term strategic partnership.            (Cllr W. Ploszaj/C. Johns-McLeod – 01670 623875)</p>	CSEG OSC 6 September 2021	7 September 2021
<p><b>Energising Blyth Programme (Energy Central Campus)</b>            This report seeks to update Cabinet and seek key decisions regarding arrangements to support the development and establishment of the Energy Central Campus. This project is one of the priority schemes in the Energising Blyth Regeneration Programme including projects supported by the Future High Streets Fund and Blyth Town Deal.            (W. Ploszaj/R. Strettle – 07770642773)</p>	N/A	7 September 2021
<p><b>The Northumberland Line</b>            To provide members with an update on the scheme development and approvals process for the Northumberland Line project. Members will be asked to confirm elements of project scope and the anticipated spend profile (inc. NCC and external funding).            (W. Ploszaj / Stuart McNaughton - 07827 873139)</p>	CSEG OSC 6 September 2021	7 September 2021
<p><b>Approval of the Council Tax Support Scheme for 2022/23</b></p>	CSEG OSC 11 October 2021	12 October 2021 Council 3

<p>Since 1 April 2013 the Council is required to have its own council tax support scheme to provide assistance to council tax payers on low incomes. The scheme needs to be approved annually and assistance is by way of a reduction in the amount of council tax that is due.</p> <p>The Council Tax Support Scheme needs County Council approval.</p> <p>(R. Wearmouth/G. Barnes 624351)</p>		November 2021
<p><b>Approval of the Council Tax Base 2022/23</b></p> <p>The Council is required to set its council tax base annually. The tax base must be set between the 1st of December and 31st January. The tax base is a measure of the Council's taxable capacity which is used for the setting of its council tax. Legislation sets out the formula for calculation.</p> <p>Cabinet has delegated authority to approve the tax base.</p> <p>(R. Wearmouth/G. Barnes 624351)</p>	<p>CSEG OSC 6 December 2021</p>	7 December 2021



## Northumberland County Council

### CABINET

DATE: 7<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2021

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### **PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING STRATEGY 2021 - 2023**

**Report of:** Daljit Lally, Chief Executive

**Cabinet Member:** Councillor Colin Horncastle, Portfolio Holder for Community Services

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#### **Purpose of report**

The following report presents Cabinet with the draft **Private Sector Housing Strategy 2021-2023**, providing details of the proposed strategic objectives for the Council's Private Sector Housing Service for the following three years.

#### **Recommendations**

It is recommended that Cabinet approve the content of the draft Private Sector Housing Strategy and agree its adoption.

#### **Link to Corporate Plan**

This report is relevant to the "We want you to feel Safe, Healthy and Cared for" [LIVING] " priority included in the NCC Corporate Plan 2018-2021 which states

*Having a decent roof over your head is fundamental to this health and well being. None of you should be forced to live on the streets, or in a "home" that is a health hazard or physically impedes independence.*

#### **Key issues**

1. The current Housing Strategy for Northumberland 2019 - 2022 was developed to reflect current corporate priorities, regional and national Government priorities and the current financial climate. The priorities identified within the strategy are;
  - a. Growing Our Communities
  - b. Supporting our Residents
  - c. Improving Homes and Communities
2. The draft Private Sector Housing Strategy is a sub-strategy of the overarching Housing Strategy and sets out how we plan to work with partners and stakeholders to deliver services and support good quality housing and management standards within private sector homes in Northumberland. By this we mean homes which are owner occupied and have either been bought outright or with a mortgage, and those that are rented from a private landlord.

3. The Private Sector Housing Strategy for Northumberland 2021 - 2023 builds on the aims and objectives of the previous Private Sector Housing Strategy (2015-2020). Whilst much has been done to deliver the aims and objective of the 2015 strategy, recent changes in Government policy have necessitated the production of a new strategy.
4. As agreed by Executive and Informal Cabinet in November 2020, a four-week consultation has been undertaken across the council and with partners and stakeholders. Six responses were received all from Town or Parish Councils and all of which were generally supportive of the Strategy with only minor amendments being made.
5. A Delivery Plan profiling the plans for delivery of the priorities identified will be produced following approval of the draft strategy.

## **Background**

### **Housing Strategy for Northumberland 2019 - 2022**

**Our vision is to Improve access and supply of affordable housing by delivering the right type of homes in the right places for both existing and future communities.**

The overarching strategy supports the Council's aspirations for housing growth and the delivery of the Northumberland Local Plan which states;

*Our strategic approach to housing provision is underpinned by the Government's NPPF requirement to positively seek opportunities to meet our identified needs for housing, significantly boosting the supply of housing to help support wider opportunities for economic growth while enabling sufficient flexibility to quickly adapt to changes in circumstances that may occur*

The updated Housing Strategy supports the delivery of the Council's Corporate Priorities and the delivery of the principle within the Northumberland Local Plan that having a decent home is fundamental to the health and wellbeing of everyone living in Northumberland.

The priorities identified within the updated strategy are;

1. Growing Our Communities
2. Supporting our Residents
3. Improving Homes and Communities

Priority 3 of the Housing Strategy, *Improving Homes and Communities; Making better use of existing housing stock*, underpins the Private Sector Housing Strategy.

Empty and derelict properties are a wasted resource that could be better used to relieve homelessness and address housing needs. Empty homes can also have a negative impact on their surrounding communities.

Consequences of long term empty properties can include attracting crime, thereby reducing the value of neighbouring properties, being an eyesore, costing time and money to local authorities and being costly for the owner to maintain. There are clear economic and social benefits in overcoming these problems by returning empty homes to occupation.

As part of our drive to meet housing demand, achieve sustainable communities across the county and secure lifetime homes we will work to ensure the best use of existing homes across all tenures in the County.

The **Private Sector Housing Strategy for Northumberland 2021-2023** outlines Northumberland County Council's plans to meet people's housing needs by maintaining and improving the existing private housing stock in the County, contributing to the delivery of the Council's Corporate priorities.

The priorities within the strategy are as follows;

- *Priority 1 Increase access to affordable homes in the private sector by bringing empty homes back into use*

We need to make the best use of Northumberland's existing housing and ensure that it is contributing effectively to meeting our communities' housing needs. This involves empty homes becoming re-occupied to provide additional affordable housing of all types and tenures and increasing the choice of housing available particularly in the private rented sector. Some degree of turnover in any housing market is normal but long-term empty homes can attract problems such as fly tipping, vandalism and arson. These properties can be a blight on our community as well as a wasted housing resource.

- *Priority 2 Encourage a healthy Private Rented Sector - Improve the condition, safety and energy efficiency of private sector housing*

All private housing should at least meet the minimum standards that comply with the legislative standards ensuring that the property does not cause a physical hazard or nuisance to residents and the local neighbourhood.

- *Priority 3 Provide advice and support and take action where necessary for homeowners, landlords and tenants in the private sector*

Awareness of rights and obligations is relatively poor across the private rented sector. This is partly due to a section of small-scale landlords taking a passive approach to their role and remaining in relative ignorance of the legal framework they are operating in. Letting a property through a letting or managing agent is not always a guarantee that the property will be managed any better. Many households in private rented properties are not aware of their rights and obligations as tenants which can lead to people living in substandard housing, for example, if they are not willing to make a complaint on property conditions to their landlord for fear of facing

retaliatory eviction. This combination can lead to poorer property conditions, unchallenged inadequate management standards and illegal eviction.

- *Priority 4 Provide services to assist access to sustainable tenancies in the private rented sector*

Some people want to rent privately to live in their preferred area and others may not have any other choice due to exclusion from social housing. However, for those on the lowest levels of household incomes (and those on benefits) the main issue is gaining access to the PRS. Landlords may have concerns about their ability to sustain the rent payments and often require additional security, such as a guarantor or bond, or significant upfront rent (usually at least one month in advance) before they will accept a tenant, and this is particularly difficult for those who cannot afford it and those who are trying to recover from homelessness.

The proposed Strategy will form the framework for the development and delivery of private sector housing initiatives across the county, ensuring that all Residents of all tenures across the county have the opportunity to live in safe, secure and warm homes.

### **Implications**

<b>Policy</b>	Supports the delivery of the Housing Strategy for Northumberland 2019-2022, Corporate Plan and Local Plan
<b>Finance and value for money</b>	Current initiatives to meet the priorities detailed will be met from existing resources. The existing agreed Empty Homes Reserve of £50k will aid the delivery of Priority 1. Any new initiatives requiring investment will be agreed through future budget setting processes.
<b>Legal</b>	None
<b>Procurement</b>	None
<b>Human Resources</b>	None
<b>Property</b>	Details the council's ambitions for Private Sector Housing Services for the next 3 years. This is likely to lead to an increase in council-owned stock through effective use of purchase & repair schemes. This is reflected within the current MTFP
<b>Equalities</b> (Impact Assessment attached) Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	As part of the consultation an EIS will be completed to ensure that fair access to housing for all residents is considered.

<b>Risk Assessment</b>	none
<b>Crime &amp; Disorder</b>	none
<b>Customer Consideration</b>	Enables provision of suitable accommodation for all residents
<b>Carbon reduction</b>	none
<b>Wards</b>	All

**Background papers:**

Housing Strategy for Northumberland 2019 - 2022

<https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/Housing/Policies.aspx#ourhousingstrategiesandpolicies>

**Report sign off.**

***Authors must ensure that officers and members have agreed the content of the report:***

	initials
Monitoring Officer/Legal	NM
Executive Director of Finance & S151 Officer	JW
Relevant Executive Director	DL
Chief Executive	DL
Portfolio Holder(s)	CH

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# Northumberland

## County Council

### **Draft Private Sector Housing Strategy 2021 - 2023**

## Introduction

The Private Sector Housing Strategy for Northumberland 2021 - 2023 builds on the aims and objectives of the previous Private Sector Housing Strategy (2015-2020). Whilst much has been done to deliver the aims and objective of the 2015 strategy, recent changes in Government policy have necessitated the production of a new strategy.

The quality of a person's home has a substantial impact on their quality of life; a warm, dry and secure home is associated with better health and better wellbeing. In addition to basic housing requirements, other factors that help to improve wellbeing include the security of tenure. This is supported by two of the Council's priorities in the Corporate Plan (2018-2021) which states '*We want you to feel safe, healthy & cared for [Living]*' and '*We want you to love where you live [Enjoying]*'.

Housing is a key determinant of health; poor housing conditions continue to cause preventable deaths and contribute to health inequalities. Inadequate housing conditions such as overcrowding and affordability will all have an adverse effect on public health and exacerbate health inequalities. Deficiencies found in a home can lead to health problems, which in turn can influence community stability, crime, environmental issues and increase costs for health care providers.

Most residents in Northumberland (83%) live in properties that are privately owned or privately rented. The council can support homeowners, private landlords and private tenants to understand and achieve the benefits of a warm and safe healthy home by providing advice and assistance to those most in need. Repairing or improving a property will have an overall positive impact on personal health and wellbeing.

## Background

Improving our housing stock is an essential part of protecting the health and wellbeing of our population making warmth more affordable and reducing energy demand which helps reduce the economic disadvantage of high energy bills. The supply of good quality, affordable, privately rented accommodation is essential to meeting local housing need and this is acknowledged in the Council's Housing Strategy for Northumberland 2019 - 2022.

Since the last Private Sector Housing strategy was published in 2015 a number of new pieces of legislation have been introduced relating to private sector housing, including:

- **Protection from Retaliatory Eviction 2015**  
This was brought in to protect tenants who make complaints about disrepair in their homes

- **Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards in the Private Rented Sector 2018**  
The regulations set a minimum energy efficiency level for domestic private rented properties, the regulations were extended in 2020 to also cover existing tenancies
- **Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018**  
The Act came into force on 20 March 2019. The aim of the Act is to help drive up standards in rented homes in both the social and private sectors and provide an alternative means for tenants to seek redress from their landlord if their rented property presents a risk of harm to the health and safety of the occupiers
- **Tenant Fees Ban 2019**  
In June 2019, the Tenant Fees Act came into force, prohibiting landlords and agents from charging any fees to tenants, other than those 'permitted' by the Act.
- **The Electrical Safety Standards in the Private Rented Sector (England) Regulations 2020**  
June 2020 The regulations will apply to all properties across the private rented sector, including houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) (excluding lodger arrangements)

Further information on duties and powers in the private housing sector can be found at [Appendix 1](#)

## Local context and key challenges

Northumberland does not generally suffer from the same problems associated with low demand or abandonment compared to other parts of the North East<sup>1</sup> as the majority of private sector dwellings satisfy the Government's Decent Home Standard.<sup>2</sup>

However, the proportion of empty dwellings in Northumberland is high when compared to the England average of 2.6%. The 2011 Census recorded 9,509 empty dwellings in Northumberland of which 2,200 were classed as long term empty homes, (vacant for six months or more) representing a 6.4% vacancy rate.

In parts of the south east of the county, such as Blyth and Ashington, there are pockets of low demand and long term empty dwellings which, as well as being an eyesore in the neighbourhood, can attract crime and anti-social behaviour, and could reduce the value of surrounding properties.

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<sup>1</sup> Source Northumberland Local Plan (Draft)

<sup>2</sup> The Decent Homes Standard is linked to the Housing Health and Safety Rating System. To meet the Standard a property must meet: the statutory minimum fitness standard for housing repair; be in a reasonable state of repair; have modern facilities and services (kitchens/bathrooms); and provide a reasonable degree of thermal comfort

Failure to improve housing conditions can keep property values and rental yields low, discouraging owners from investing in their property and wider neighbourhood, and encourage the spread of low quality private rented housing<sup>3</sup>

Poor standards of energy efficiency means that many low income households in Northumberland face high costs to maintain a warm home. As a result, many households do not heat their home to an adequate level. The Fuel Poverty (Low Income High Costs) Indicator identifies 11.1% (15,883) of all households in Northumberland are fuel poor, with the worst areas being in very rural areas in the North and West, but also in pockets of Ashington.

## The Purpose of our Strategy

This strategy sets out how we plan to work with partners, stakeholders **and local communities** to deliver services and support good quality housing and management standards within private sector homes in Northumberland. By this we mean homes which are owner occupied and have either been bought outright or with a mortgage, and those that are rented from a private landlord. Homes rented from the Council and other Private Registered Providers of social housing are not included in this strategy.

The Strategy will be accompanied by an Action Plan which will set out what the Council hopes to achieve and by when. The Action Plan will be agreed with partners and stakeholders and will be used to monitor progress over the period of the strategy.

## Aims and Objectives

The Northumberland Corporate Plan 2018-2021 states:

*Having a decent roof over your head is fundamental to this health and well being. None of you should be forced to live on the streets, or in a “home” that is a health hazard or physically impedes independence...*

The principles set out in the Draft Northumberland Local Plan states: *Having a decent home is fundamental to the health and wellbeing of everyone living in Northumberland...*

The priorities of the Housing Strategy for Northumberland 2019-2022 are *Growing our Communities; Supporting our Residents and Improving Homes and Communities*. This Strategy will enable the Council to achieve these priorities.

In addition this strategy will also contribute to the delivery of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2019 –2021 objectives.

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<sup>3</sup> The Hidden Costs of Poor Quality Housing in North (Northern Housing Consortium, 2019)

To deliver these aims the Northumberland Private Sector Housing Strategy defines our objectives and identifies how the Council will:

- Bring empty properties back into use
- Improve the condition, safety and energy efficiency in the private housing sector
- Ensure advice and support is available to landlords and tenants regarding rights and obligations
- Ensure clients have access to support in the private rented sector

We can meet these challenges with four priority areas defining our focus over the period of this strategy. These priorities are;

1. Increase access to affordable homes in the private sector through bringing empty homes back into use
2. Ensuring a healthy private rented sector through improving the condition, safety and energy efficiency of private sector housing
3. Provide advice and support and take action where necessary for homeowners, landlords and tenants in the private sector.
4. Provide services to assist access to sustainable tenancies in the private rented sector

To successfully achieve our aim and objectives we will work in partnership with a wide range of people and organisations, for example agencies, charities, community groups, local landlords and neighbouring authorities. Strategic partnerships with our Public Health colleagues, Housing Operations, Planning and other services across the Council are fundamental to ensuring committed resources when developing interventions to improve health and wellbeing through improving housing.

## **Priority 1**

### **Increase access to affordable homes in the private sector by bringing empty homes back into use**

We need to make the best use of Northumberland's existing housing and ensure that it is contributing effectively to meeting our communities' housing needs. This involves empty homes becoming re-occupied to provide additional affordable housing of all types and tenures and increasing the choice of housing available particularly in the private rented sector

Some degree of turnover in any housing market is normal but long-term empty homes can attract problems such as fly tipping, vandalism and arson. These properties can be a blight on our community as well as a wasted housing resource.

Our approach will be to work alongside owners of empty homes with a solution based approach, tailored to individual circumstances and property location, to support and encourage voluntary action. However, we are also committed to using appropriate enforcement action where owners fail to take responsibility for their properties, reasonable negotiations fail or there is little prospect of the property being bought back into use voluntarily.

In April 2020 the Council made significant changes to Council Tax rules which could make an impact on the number of empty properties in Northumberland. Where a property remains unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for more than two years an additional premium of 100% will be charged, meaning that the Council Tax bill will be 200%, this will rise to 300% after five years. From April 2021 any property that has been empty for more than ten years will be liable to pay 400% Council Tax.

**Key issues and challenges:**

- There are an estimated 1927 long term empty dwellings across Northumberland and these are mainly in the private sector
- Owners of properties may not wish to make best use of their assets on a voluntary basis
- Owners of properties may wish to bring their properties back into use but may not have the means to do so
- The former coalfield areas have pockets of empty homes in such poor condition that the owners may question the viability of returning them back in to use

To increase access to affordable homes in the private sector the Council will increase activity to bring long term empty homes back into use;

- Stay in regular contact with owners of empty homes to offer them advice, information and assistance on bringing their property back into use.
- In the worst cases, where encouragement is not successful, a multi-agency/departmental approach will be adopted to ensure a coordinated use of available council wide enforcement powers with the aim of bringing problematic long term empty homes back into use.
- Continue to use procedures and protocols to enable us to undertake Empty Dwelling Management Orders (EDMO's) for homes that have been empty for over 2 years. These orders give us the opportunity to take over the management of the property from the owner/landlord in certain circumstances to enable the re-occupation.
- Work with the Capital Programme team to increase the number of empty properties brought back into use through the Homes England Purchase and Repair scheme

- Continue to seek funding from Homes England to assist with costs towards enforcement tools (such as EDMO's)
- Identify and unlock barriers to returning empty properties back in to use
- Develop a tool kit of measures available to the team to ensure a consistent approach is taken with all empty properties
- Work proactively with the Council's Regeneration Team to assist in the delivery of specific Market Town strategies for example the 'Energising Blyth' Future High Streets Fund programme

## Priority 2

### **Encourage a healthy Private Rented Sector - Improve the condition, safety and energy efficiency of private sector housing**

All private housing should at least meet the minimum standards that comply with the legislative standards ensuring that the property does not cause a physical hazard or nuisance to residents and the local neighbourhood.

We currently operate a Private Rented Sector Property Accreditation Scheme to help support landlords in managing their properties and tenancies correctly. It has been recognised that this scheme is in need of updating in order to continue to support our landlords effectively. This is particularly important, considering new legislation that has been introduced into the private rented sector, such as the Fitness for Human Habitation Act, Minimum Energy Performance Certificate Ratings and Mandatory Electrical Testing – all of which are likely to have an impact on a tenants experience within their property.

As part of the Property Accreditation Scheme we carry out inspections on properties where the landlord has expressed interest in becoming part of the scheme. One of the main functions of the scheme is to work with private landlords to raise standards (property and management) in the private rented sector by ensuring that their properties comply with safety standards set out in the scheme and with the legislation that requires every private rented property to have the relevant certificates such as the Landlord Gas Safe Certificate and Energy Performance Certificate (EPC). All of which may contribute to the reduction of households in fuel poverty.

Fuel poverty is driven by three key factors; the energy efficiency of the property, the cost of the fuel bills and the household income. Improving energy and fuel efficiency are the mechanisms to reduce fuel poverty and improve health, with these efficiencies also being beneficial to the climate change agenda.

The Energy Act 2011 set up an obligation on energy companies (ECO) to help certain groups of consumers to save energy in their home, and developed regulations that require landlords to meet minimum energy efficiency standards in their properties.

Northumberland County Council understands that addressing climate change needs to be acted on urgently and have set a target date of 2030 for net zero emissions and have declared that there is a climate emergency.<sup>4</sup>

Housing condition, heating type, and tenure will all influence a home's energy efficiency and the occupant's ability to afford adequate heating. For example, improving energy efficiency in the home will help to prevent excess winter deaths<sup>5</sup> each year by helping to ensure homes are adequately heated, through reduced heat loss and improved heating systems.

We will work with landlords to encourage them to bring their properties up to minimum energy efficiency levels as per the 2018 legalisation<sup>6</sup> which requires landlords to ensure their properties reach a standard of at least an E Energy Performance Certificate. It is estimated that there are 15,883 fuel poor households in Northumberland, this equates to 11.1 % of all households.<sup>7</sup> In 2015 Northumberland was in the top 10 local authorities in England with the lowest proportion of EPC coverage.<sup>8</sup>

### **Key issues and challenges**

- Training is required to enable identification and appropriate action to be taken in response to the Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act and the Housing Health & Safety Rating System (HHSRS) when carrying out property inspections for the Property Accreditation Scheme
- There is no comprehensive data on the condition of private sector housing stock in Northumberland making it difficult to fully understand the issues
- Fuel poverty in Northumberland is higher than the national average
- Under reporting of poor conditions in the private rented sector
- Homeowners have limited knowledge of grants and other incentives
- Limited resources in relation to financial incentives

To improve the condition, safety and energy efficiency of existing homes the Council will:

- Explore viability of carrying out a countywide stock condition survey to ensure the focus of services and resources are targeted to where they are most needed

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<sup>4</sup> Northumberland County Council Climate Commitment Action Plan 2020-21 (Draft)

<sup>5</sup> Excess winter deaths are the number of people whose deaths were registered between December and March, compared with the numbers for the previous three months and the following three months (ONS, 2015).

<sup>6</sup> The Energy Efficiency (Private Rented Property)(England and Wales) Regulations 2015 which came into force on 1st April 2018.

<sup>7</sup> Department Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Sub Regional Fuel Poverty England 2019 (2017 data)

<sup>8</sup> Mapping Energy Performance data by parliamentary constituency Centre for Sustainable Energy 2015

- Increase the energy efficiency of homes and contribute to achieving the county's carbon reduction ambition
- Increase the suitability of properties through repairs and adaptations
- Help people to live independently in their home thereby reducing the reliance on health and social care services
- Ensure that private rented accommodation is effectively managed.
- Ensure that homeowners and landlords are made aware of funding available to improve their properties
- To improve energy efficiency in the home and reduce the risk of fuel poverty and associated health problems by; raising public awareness, providing specific and appropriate advice to householders and landlords, making referrals into grant and discount schemes
- Provide training on the implementation of the HHSRS and the Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act
- Take action against landlords in cases where there is a failure to maintain their property under the Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018 or offer more practical assistance to tenants seeking redress under the Act, especially vulnerable tenants
- Develop a promotional campaign to inform tenants of the circumstances under which they can take action against their landlord

### **Priority 3**

#### **Provide advice and support and take action where necessary for homeowners, landlords and tenants in the private sector**

Awareness of rights and obligations is relatively poor across the private rented sector. This is partly due to a section of small-scale landlords taking a passive approach to their role and remaining in relative ignorance of the legal framework they are operating in. Letting a property through a letting or managing agent is not always a guarantee that the property will be managed any better. Many households in private rented properties are not aware of their rights and obligations as tenants which can lead to people living in substandard housing, for example, if they are not willing to make a complaint on property conditions to their landlord for fear of facing retaliatory eviction. This combination can lead to poorer property conditions, unchallenged inadequate management standards and illegal eviction.

The Council always tries to work informally with landlords, tenants and homeowners in the first instance, however current legislation provides the Council with enforcement tools to help ensure essential improvements are made to properties.

The main legislation utilised in private sector housing is the Housing Act 2004, as it can require both homeowners and landlords to carry out works.

Departments within the Council, such as Environmental Health, Social Services, Education Services and Revenues & Benefits may come into contact with tenants who have been illegally evicted, or who are experiencing harassment from their landlord. We need procedures in place to ensure these cases are directed to the appropriate services for timely assistance.

### **Key issues and challenges**

- Some Landlords and tenants may have a limited awareness of their rights and obligations, which can lead to illegal evictions
- Less security in the private rented sector
- Poor property and management standards can lead to high turnover of tenants which can contribute to unstable communities, as tenants leave before reporting conditions to the relevant authority

To provide advice and support to the private rented sector we will:

- Provide training for staff to ensure confidence in dealing with allegations of illegal evictions
- Develop a 'Call Before You Serve' scheme for private landlords that will act as an early intervention tool to prevent homelessness assisting landlords to consider alternative remedies before proceeding with the eviction process.
- Develop procedures to enable closer working with the Homelessness and Housing Options team to help prevent homelessness
- Offer advice and guidance and where necessary take enforcement action to ensure property and management standards improve
- Provide advice and guidance to new landlords about property and management standards to help them get it 'right first time'.
- Develop a guide and checklist across the Council to enable services to recognise when their client's housing rights are being infringed and direct them to the correct service
- Develop a streamlined approach to identifying and tackling Rogue Landlord activity within Northumberland
- Raise awareness of the rights of tenants, particularly those who are vulnerable, to report poor housing conditions or management practices in order for the Council to consider exercising its enforcement powers.
- Review and develop an updated Financial Assistance Policy to assist homeowners in improving their homes.

## **Priority 4**

**Provide services to assist access to sustainable tenancies in the private rented sector**

Some people want to rent privately to live in their preferred area and others may not have any other choice due to exclusion from social housing. However, for those on the lowest levels of household incomes (and those on benefits) the main issue is gaining access to the PRS. Landlords may have concerns about their ability to sustain the rent payments and often require additional security, such as a guarantor or bond, or significant upfront rent (usually at least one month in advance) before they will accept a tenant, and this is particularly difficult for those who cannot afford it and those who are trying to recover from homelessness.

In response to these issues the Council operates a Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme (RDGS) which combines with the property accreditation schemes to inspect properties ensuring they are safe and suitable to be let to tenants.

The RDGS has assisted 186 clients to access a private rented property over the past six years; this number could be higher if more landlords were prepared to work with the team and be willing to accept the cashless bond offered by the scheme.

It has also been recognised that the failure of tenancies in the private sector can be quite high with loss of tenancy in the private rented sector accounting for 21% of all households where the main reason for being homeless or threatened with homelessness. It is believed that this is partly due to the lack of support for vulnerable tenants when they initially take on the tenancy.

#### **Key issues and challenges**

- Support is required to help vulnerable tenants sustain their tenancies, reducing the risk of homelessness or repeat homelessness
- Limited awareness of the benefits of using the RDGS
- Some landlords unwilling to engage with the accreditation service

To assist access to sustainable tenancies in the private rented sector we will:

- Refocus the RDGS to include a support element to ensure more tenancies are sustained
- Focus on groups vulnerable to poor housing conditions, such as a low income, physical and mental health issues and those who were previously homeless
- Utilise the knowledge within the Northumberland Communities Together Hub that the voluntary and community based organisations have on vulnerable people who are affected by poor housing, and making sure that these organisations are aware of the services available so that they can refer private occupants to us for housing support

- Promote our services more widely to our customers online, through our website and social media making it easier for customers to access information on home energy efficiency, accessing loans and grants to repair or adapt their home and finding suitable affordable accommodation
- Provide more information for tenants, such as average market rents across property sizes. This will help tenants to make an informed choice.
- Build upon the relationship we have with Public Protection to ensure clients and landlords are supported with alleged disrepair claims
- Provide advice and information for landlords and tenants in relation to disrepair and what this looks like, how to deal with it efficiently

## **Monitoring and reporting our progress**

An Action/Delivery Plan will be developed that will ensure that the Council's objectives as set out in this strategy are delivered and reported on to elected Members and to the residents of Northumberland.

The Strategic Housing team has responsibility for this Housing Strategy and will use it to plan and direct its workload. The management team will check progress against this strategy on a quarterly basis, and produce regular reports to let staff and elected Members know how we are doing.

Progress against our priorities will be reported annually to elected Members and we will produce an annual report setting out our progress against this strategy. If changes happen that significantly affect our ability to deliver our housing priorities (such as new legislation) then the strategy will be reviewed in addition to the annual review of the plan and targets, involving any partners.

## **Equality and diversity statement**

The Private Sector Housing Strategy for Northumberland 2020– 2023 outlines Northumberland County Council's approach to our statutory duty to identify and meet housing need.

The strategy outlines the interventions that support some protected groups who may be disadvantaged when accessing housing.

The strategy does not discriminate, directly or indirectly, on any of the nine protected characteristics in the Equalities Act 2010:

- [Age](#)
- [Disability](#)
- [Gender reassignment](#)
- [Marriage and civil partnership](#)
- [Pregnancy and maternity](#)

- [Race](#)
- [Religion or belief](#)
- [Sex](#)
- [Sexual orientation](#)

Housing Services also have a direct impact on the different protected characteristics of equalities legislation. Some protected groups are disproportionately characterised by economic disadvantage and therefore also at a disadvantage when accessing the housing market on which most people rely. Any action to complement and to improve the affordability of housing construction, distribution and maintenance will therefore directly address inequality for all the “strands”

Further information regarding Equality and Diversity can be found on the Northumberland County Council website [www.northumberland.gov.uk](http://www.northumberland.gov.uk)

### **Associated documents**

Housing Strategy for Northumberland 2019-2022

Northumberland County Council Corporate Plan 2018-2021

Northumberland Local Plan Publication Draft Plan (Regulation 19) (January 2019)

Northumberland Extra Care and Supported Housing Strategy 2018

Northumberland Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2019- 2021

### **Appendix 1**

There are a significant number of powers and duties on local authorities relating to the private rented sector, the main ones listed below. Over the past couple of years there has been a significant increase in legislation and regulation covering the private rental sector with more to follow. The local authority is increasingly being given the role of regulator and enforcer.

Measure	Comments
(Power) Protection from Eviction Act 1977	The investigation and prosecution of criminal offences relating to illegal eviction and the harassment of private tenants
(Duty) Notices under the Housing Act 2004	Enforcement of the Housing Health and Safety Rating system providing reasonably safe homes free from hazards
(Duty) Protection from retaliatory eviction 2015	To protect tenants who make complaints about disrepair in their homes

(Power) Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm regulations 2015	To ensure alarms are fitted in all private rented homes
(Power) Redress Schemes for Letting Agency Work and property management regulations 2015	Enforcing the criminal offence of not being part of a redress scheme
(Power) Banning orders 2018	Introduced from April 2018
(Power) Rent Repayment Orders 2017	Linked to banning orders
(Power) Civil Penalty Notices 2017	Introduces powers to fine non-compliant landlords up to £30,000. Fines Could make a contribution towards the cost of running the service.
(Duty) Recording rogue landlords 2018	Came Into force April 2018.
(Duty) Minimum energy efficiency standards 2018 and 2020	Introduced April 2018 for new tenants, April 2020 for existing tenants
(Duty) Homelessness Prevention Act 2018	Introduced April 2018, requires stronger support for all those threatened with homelessness.
(Duty) Extension of mandatory HMO licensing 2018	Introduced October 2018, covers one and two storey properties. Opportunity for additional fees to pay for additional staffing. Currently there are ** licenced HMOs in Northumberland
(Power) Tenant Fees Ban 2019	The Tenant Fees Act came into force in June 2019, prohibiting landlords and agents from charging any fees to tenants, other than those 'permitted' by the Act.
Consumer redress 2019	There is likely to be a single ombudsman service across housing including the PRS, still being considered by government

<p>Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018</p>	<p>The Act came into force on 20 March 2019. The aim of the Act is to help drive up standards in rented homes in both the social and private sectors and provide an alternative means for tenants to seek redress from their landlord if their rented property presents a risk of harm to the health and safety of the occupiers.</p>
<p>A new deal for renting consultation (Resetting the balance of right and responsibilities between landlords and tenants)</p>	<p>The 2019 consultation sought views on how to implement the Government's decision to abolish section 21 of the Housing Act 1988 and improve the implementation of section 8.</p>
<p>The Electrical Safety Standards in the Private Rented Sector (England) Regulations 2020</p>	<p>June 2020 The regulations will apply to all properties across the private rented sector, including houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) (excluding lodger arrangements)</p>

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**Active Northumberland**

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Annual Outcome Report 2020-2021

June 2021

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## Vision

Our vision is “To be the Best Community and Wellness Provider in the UK” at delivering quality leisure, physical activity and sporting opportunities across Northumberland and to improve the health and fitness of the population of Northumberland in line with the Northumberland Health and Wellbeing strategy.

People in Northumberland will have a better quality of life as a result of their participation in physical activity and sport. Active Northumberland is not just about sport, it is about “wellness” and, feeling fitter, with a focus on improving health and wellbeing and preventing ill health and social isolation.

## Background

Active Northumberland (AN) is a registered charity (company limited by guarantee) formed in 2014 from a merger of several different leisure service providers.

AN has circa 710 full and part time equivalent employees and a Board of 10 non-executive Directors (trustees) with a diverse and relevant range of expertise and senior level management experience. AN operates nine large leisure centres (some of which combine library services) and a number of smaller facilities, including school sport facilities, welfare centres and are responsible for the Pegasus Riding Centre which offers horse riding for the disabled and livery services. All of AN’s facility and service management contracts are within the county of Northumberland.

The majority of the facilities operated by AN are owned by Northumberland County Council (NCC) and are leased to AN, who in turn manages the operation of leisure facilities and services for NCC under an Operating or Partnership Agreement. The Partnership Agreement coupled with a performance management framework ensures progress is appropriately recorded and acknowledged, and that under AN’s management, NCC’s leisure assets and resources are optimised and successfully contribute to NCC’s Corporate Plan priorities and objectives.

## 2020-2021 Overview

Public service budget pressures present a challenge to AN of retaining and continuing to develop and improve services with a continually reducing management fee. Efficiency saving requirements deliverable over the period 2018-21/22 are £765K, with £265k in 2019/20, £200k in 2020/21 and £300k in 2021/22.

In addition to these savings requirements a further budget pressure in the region of £1 million was anticipated (per annum) from 2019, resulting from a pay/grading and harmonisation of employee terms and conditions exercise. Utilities tariff increases also represent a significant budget pressure although during 2020/21 we have seen a reduction in utility consumption due to the forced Covid 19 closures, however we estimate a 3% increase for 2021-22. NCC and AN are continuing to work closely together to manage cost pressures, including looking at green energy supply as well as invest to save schemes and working and operating more efficiently.



## 2020-2021 Performance

**NCC INSTRUCTION: Setting out performance for the previous financial year against the Annual Service Plan and highlighting any areas of activity or outcomes where the Contractor has not contributed to the Council's Outcomes Documents and provide an action plan for the following year of how this will be addressed and how the other Authority Outcomes will continue to be delivered. The report should also identify any beneficial outcomes achieved by the Contractor in addition to those required by the Authority.**

In 2020-2021 we faced a number of challenges that affected the corporate outcomes we set out to be achieved. As we head into 2021-2022, we intend to still deliver and achieve those outcomes.

<b>2020-2021 Corporate Outcome</b>	<b>Delivery Challenges &amp; Action Plan for Achievement in 2021-2022</b>
<p><b>Our Partners</b>  <i>Focus: Identification and development of opportunities to co-locate, co-design and co-deliver services to support partners to reduce and better manage demand on health, social care and specialist education intervention services.</i></p>	
<p>Deliver a sustainable Alternative Provision Service model for pupils that are either at: 1. At Risk of exclusion, 2. Looked After Children 3. Permanently excluded children from school 4. 16 + SEN young adult provision</p>	<p>In partnership with The 3 Rivers Learning Trust Teaching School Alliance, we aim to deliver a programme of Secondary School Teacher Training to 20 schools, sported by Sport England funding.</p>
<p>Deliver a service to enhance Day Care Support Services (including respite for carers) and internship opportunities for adults with learning difficulties and disabilities.</p>	<p>In partnership with the Football Association, we aim to support the development of a girls' football offer in schools &amp; the community in the Berwick area</p>
<p>Deliver a joint plan with the Education Partnership North East to improve outcomes for learners and employees.</p>	<p>We aim to improve outcomes for all children and young people and explore ways in which RISE the active partnership can support this. The delivery will be targeted, aimed predominately at disadvantaged groups within the county.</p>
<p>Deliver a joint service delivery plan with NUFC Foundation as part of North of Tyne strategic partnership work.</p>	<p>We aim to further develop joint service delivery with NUFC Foundation &amp; Town Councils to support increased use of centre facilities in school holidays</p>
<p>1. AN School Sport service delivers high quality physical activity in schools and the community setting. 2. Teachers Performance Management policy is established and monitored successfully. 3. Maintain membership for the Association of Physical Education (AfPE). 4. Relevant support services and policies are introduced, recommendations agreed, and updates implemented as necessary.</p>	<p>To deliver a recognised high-quality Physical Education offer in partnership schools and to deliver a School Games offer that can be accessed for all students in Y3-Y12. To further develop opportunities to work collaboratively with NCC Education Service</p>

## Our People

Focus: The creation of a values based culture and optimisation of workforce capacity, capability and efficiency.

<p>To have facilities that provide a safe operating environment for both employees and customers post pandemic (COVID-19).</p>	<p>Despite ever changing guidance and with both national and local restrictions imposed upon the operation, we successfully opened our facilities in a safe manner, being the first Trust in the North East to open after lockdown 1.0. We will continue to monitor the operational guidance around Covid-19 and update our safe working practices to ensure that our facilities remain safe and accessible for all.</p>
<p>To have a high willed and high performing workforce that is aligned to the strategy and values of the organisation.</p>	<p>During the period 2020-21, a large percentage of our people were furloughed for significant periods of the year, making it extremely difficult to align workforce to the strategy. We did, however, ensure that all our people were provided with training opportunities both whilst on leave and prior to returning to work, to ensure that they felt safe and supported in the workplace. We will use 2021-22 to roll out our performance management policy to ensure that all our people have an appraisal that will align their Personal Development Plans to the strategy and values of the organisation.</p>
<p>To have a strategic workforce development partner and produce a workforce training and development plan aligned to the Transformation Strategy objectives.</p>	<p>We appointed Future Fit as our strategic workforce development partner earlier this year, a company that offers training and development specific to the industry. We have successfully migrated our safeguarding policy onto the platform and asked the workforce to undertake online competency tests. We are currently working to identify development opportunities via the apprenticeship levy, whilst building a training plan for all job roles that will be migrated onto the system, along with all statutory and mandatory training to ensure successful delivery of training and development objectives.</p>
<p>To produce a strategic level Board action plan to optimise the gross added value provided by Non-Executive Directors.</p>	<p>The CEO and Chair of the Board of Trustees have undertaken a strategic analysis of director skills and identified where there is a gap in skills at Board level. Future recruitment to Board will ensure that candidates are recruited to fill gaps in skills.</p>
<p>To have appropriate support services in place to help the Company achieve its goals, through an appropriate service level agreement with key partners and stakeholders.</p>	<p>Industry support services and relationships have been crucial in exchanging critical re-opening and operating information.</p> <p>We have realigned our SLA's with NCC departments to the end of our management agreement at the end of March 2022.</p>

	We will work with Officers and Members of the Council during this year to secure a new management agreement from April 2022 and to realign support service agreements in line with any length of contract agreed, providing stability for Active and NCC workforces.
<p><b>Our Places</b></p> <p><i>Focus: To drive continuous improvement through the implementation of a Quality Management System to support service operations and the capital programme.</i></p>	
To have a Company that is able to successfully operate post pandemic (COVID-19) and continue to deliver desired outcomes across the business.	The period 2020-21 was certainly financially challenging for the Company due to the restrictive ability to generate income. Although a greater subsidy was required from NCC, the amount of subsidy required was a lot less than originally budgeted for due to the diligence of the team. There is agreement from NCC to support the Company until March 2022 and during this time, we will be working to maximise our income across the portfolio to reduce any subsidy required. We will also continue to work with local companies to deliver to the Health and Wellbeing agenda and ensure that we are at the forefront of post covid health issues, whilst continuing to expand our health schemes such as Momenta, Health walks, exercise on referral and cardiac rehabilitation.
To have high class, high value leisure facilities that meet the needs of the community and drive increased footfall to offset reductions in the management fee.	Work continued on the development of the new facilities at Berwick and Morpeth and the refurbishment of Blyth during the pandemic and we were able to successfully open Ponteland in January, with restricted activities. We will aim to drive increased footfall during 2021-22 in line with any Covid-19 restrictions and work to recover members and users that were lost during 2020-21.
To have long term lease agreement in place with NCC for all facilities to provide longevity for the management of the facilities	In conjunction with any new management agreement from April 2022, leases will be rearranged and realigned to provide for longevity of the management of facilities.
To have top performing leisure facilities in the country that are able to document a journey of continuous improvement and underpinned by both internal and external quality assessments and a robust health and safety management system.	A series of internal and external audits have been completed with further assessments booked for the end of the financial year. QUEST Prime a new product developed by Right Directions has been undertaken by Ashington Leisure Centre. The development, review and introduction of new Health & Safety documentation is ongoing with a suite of accessible documents being available to team members through an online system.

<p>To have leisure facilities that maximise energy efficiency opportunities and contribute to the environment through a reduced carbon footprint along with reducing waste in other areas of the operation.</p>	<p>Continued investments in new facilities and refurbishments to major plant has reduced the average DEC score to 11 points lower than the industry average. Further inhouse opportunities are being developed with the assistance of Energy Champions at each of the sites.</p>
<p>To have appropriate support services in place with deliverable service level agreements (SLA).</p>	<p>We have realigned our SLA's with NCC departments to the end of our management agreement at the end of March 2022.</p> <p>Each SLA is detailed and sets out responsibilities and expected deliverables from each party.</p> <p>New deliverable SLA's will be written and agreed in line with any new management agreement from April 2022.</p> <p>Where support services are not delivered by NCC, appropriate SLA's will be in place with external agencies.</p>
<p><b><i>Our Products (&amp; Services)</i></b></p> <p><i>Focus: Optimise aquatics services and progress the fitness service towards a fully integrated wellness service to improve outcomes and retention.</i></p>	
<p>To deliver a Health &amp; wellness customer experience that will enable us to retain and recruit new members post pandemic (Covid-19).</p>	<p>A full review of our member journey has been undertaken and a Sales &amp; Retention policy produced and now in circulation, with training to support the policy ongoing. We have continued to work with our strategic partners at Technogym to ensure we continue to utilise the MyWellness platform to its full potential whilst also ensuring we followed all Covid protocols. Throughout the pandemic we continued to support our members and the wider communities through the provision of online content both through our social media channels as well as our Active Wellness platform.</p>
<p>To provide a safe and efficient aquatic customer experience post pandemic (Covid19).</p>	<p>We adapted our pool programs across the full estate to ensure our pool program catered for all user groups during the pandemic. Our structured pool sessions have allowed us to gain a full appreciation of our pool usage whilst also ensuring our customers could participate in their chosen aquatic activity in a safe environment.</p>
<p>To review and redesign the gym and group exercise offer and customer journey using insight from partners coupled with research and evaluation activity.</p>	<p>We continue to monitor the data and remodel our journey and group exercise program depending upon what the data is telling us. This is a very fluent process that will enable us to meet our customer demands.</p>

<p>To review and redesign the Exercise on Referral Service to optimise the customer experience, improve impact and extend the pathways offered linking to Primary Care.</p>	<p>Whilst the pandemic has delayed us in exploring other opportunities in terms of referral pathways, we have adapted our service during the pandemic to ensure our Exercise on Referral clients received some level of support during the lockdown period, whether that be by participation in online sessions or by simply providing the clients with a welfare call to check on their wellbeing both from a physical perspective as well as a mental one.</p>
<p>To review, redesign and standardise aquatics services and customer experience to meet latent demand and optimise quality and efficiency.</p>	<p>A lot of work has been undertaken in the last 12 months to ensure both our school swimming program and Learn2Swim program and framework is consistent across all of our facilities. We have also undertaken a lot of work to ensure our session etiquette across all our facilities is consistent whether that be for a lane session, swim4all session or fun4all session.</p>
<p>To review and redesign catering services to optimise commercial opportunity, and to ensure alignment with wellness objectives.</p>	<p>We have introduced a new brand "HIVE" across all the catering venues, the areas have had a facelift and a new menu introduced. We have standardised our core menu across the estate to ensure consistency. We will continue to develop and grow once restrictions have been lifted.</p>
<p>To review relevant support services and policies and introduce agreed recommendations.</p>	<p>We have realigned our SLA's with NCC departments to the end of our management agreement at the end of March 2022.</p> <p>Each SLA is detailed and sets out responsibilities and expected deliverables from each party.</p> <p>New deliverable SLA's will be written and agreed in line with any new management agreement from April 2022.</p> <p>Where support services are not delivered by NCC, appropriate SLA's will be in place with external agencies.</p>
<p><b><i>Other Additional Outcomes Achieved</i></b></p>	
<p>Active Northumberland continued to deliver a digital offer to all residents whilst facilities were closed.</p>	
<p>Hirst Nursey continued to offer childcare places for key workers and remained open during all lockdowns.</p>	
<p>Mental Health Support continued for Mams on the Move at risk of post-natal depression.</p>	
<p>External Audits for the safe operation of 4 swimming pools returned very good reports.</p>	

## **Active Northumberland**

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Annual Service Report

April 20- April 21

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## Vision

Our vision is “To be the Best Community and Wellness Provider in the UK” at delivering quality leisure, physical activity and sporting opportunities across Northumberland and to improve the health and fitness of the population of Northumberland in line with the Northumberland Health and Wellbeing strategy by 2022.

People in Northumberland will have a better quality of life as a result of their participation in physical activity and sport. Active Northumberland is not just about sport, it is about “wellness” and, feeling fitter, with a focus on improving health and wellbeing and preventing ill health and social isolation.

## Background

Active Northumberland (AN) is a registered charity (company limited by guarantee) formed in 2014 from a merger of several different leisure service providers.

AN has circa 710 employees consisting of a mix of contracted (both full and part time) and casual staff and a Board of 10 non-executive Directors (trustees) with a diverse and relevant range of expertise and senior level management experience. AN operates nine large leisure centres (some of which combine library services) and a number of smaller facilities, including school sport facilities, welfare centres and are responsible for the Pegasus Riding Centre which offers horse riding for the disabled and livery services All of AN's facility and service management contracts are within the county of Northumberland.

The majority of the facilities operated by AN are owned by Northumberland County Council (NCC) and are leased to AN, who in turn manages the operation of leisure facilities and services for NCC under an Operating or Partnership Agreement. The Partnership Agreement, coupled with a performance management framework ensures progress is appropriately recorded and acknowledged, and that under AN's management, NCC's leisure assets and resources are optimised and successfully contribute to NCC's Corporate Plan priorities and objectives.

Public service budget pressures present a challenge to AN of retaining and continuing to develop and improve services with a continually reducing management fee. Efficiency saving requirements deliverable over the period 2018-21/22 are £765K, with £265k in 2019/20, £200k in 2020/21 and £300k in 2021/22.

In addition to these savings requirements a further budget pressure in the region of £1 million was anticipated (per annum) from 2019, resulting from a pay/grading and harmonisation of employee terms and conditions exercise. Utilities tariff increases also represent a significant budget pressure although during 2020/21 we have seen a reduction in utility consumption due to the forced Covid 19 closures, however we estimate a 3% increase for 2021-22. NCC and AN are continuing to work closely together to manage cost pressures, including looking at green energy supply as well as invest to save schemes and working and operating more efficiently.

## Performance

The dedication and hard work of AN's people, coupled with the support of partners, has resulted in a remarkably successful year despite the period being dominated by COVID-19 and the significant loss of revenues. We have an exceptional team of people at AN, and they have clearly demonstrated a fantastic team effort and amazing passion for our business and our customers.

## Performance Headlines

Our year-end position figures show a £1.875m loss against budget but holding a cash reserve of £1.328M.

## Participation Highlights

- € Over 90,000 swims across 9 pools.
- € Learn to swim programme class occupancy rates dropped to 84%, (1% less than last year).
- € Gym visits decreased by 489,604 to 139,315.
- € Over 3300 exercise referral visits by people with long term health conditions.
- € 5,799 Facebook posts, the average social media reach per post was 1,164.

Going forward performance monitoring and evaluation involving the Corporate Key Performance Indicator framework added to the company's balanced scorecard. The company's quality management system will be aligned to pursue Quest quality assurance accreditation at main facilities, and a number of operational outputs will benefit from national benchmarking.

## The Board Governance and Management

Active Northumberland Board members have been recruited through a recruitment agency matching skills and knowledge to the needs of the organisation. As well as experience of management and strategic planning, Trustees are required to have relevant sector and geographical knowledge enabling them to contribute effectively to the Charity's strategic objectives.

The Board work to ensure that they remain assured that the organisation is delivering effectively against its key aims and charitable objectives. In line with a Management Agreement with the Council the Board receives regular reports on financial issues, HR (Human Resources) issues and has developed a risk register and stringent health and safety arrangements which are routinely audited and reported at board meetings.

## Public Benefit

Created as a leisure trust, in partnership with the local council, the ethos of the leisure trust is to operate on a non-profit basis with a mission that is rooted in addressing health inequalities. Trusts therefore endeavor to maximise the health and social value of the public leisure assets they manage, for example, by providing concessionary services and bespoke services to support people with long term health conditions and disabilities.

## Board of Trustees:

Chair - David Hall (Northumbrian Water)

Joint Vice Chair – Jane Riley (Independent)

Trustee – Modaser Choudhary (Newcastle University)

Trustee – Malcolm Copland (Greggs)

Trustee – Steve Crosland (Independent)

Trustee – Claire Riley (NHS (National Health Service))

Company Secretary – (New appointment to role 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021)

The Board of Trustees have signed up to and act within the principles of the Active Northumberland Governance Code of Conduct. A standing agenda item, enabling Trustees to declare any relevant interests, is included at each Board meeting. The Board has agreed a Conflicts of Interest Policy taking account of the Charity Commission and Regulator Guidance.

The Board meet every two months with a minimum attendance of 50% for all Board meetings being agreed, and attendance at Board meetings remaining high at 80% overall. This is currently monitored by the Executive and reported to the Board on an annual basis enabling any issues to be addressed. All meetings have taken place as planned, enabling effective decision making throughout the year. Board meetings throughout 2021 have been held via Team calls to ensure that they could continue as normal while also respecting the COVID-19 restrictions.

A new Company Secretary has been appointed as of 01/04/21.

## Increasing Health & Social Impact

As part of the Joint Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2018-2028, we are working to deliver the strategic priorities together with, and complementing the work of, our partners.

### Giving children and young people the best start in life:

Active Northumberland are committed to promoting good physical health and wellbeing of children and young people (CYP) within Northumberland. We aim to ensure that every CYP has a great start in life, and we understand how sport and leisure can make a positive contribution to a young person's life.

We support schools within Northumberland developing opportunities to develop whole school approaches in Physical Education, School Sport and Physical Activity (PESSPA) with the intent to develop positive attitudes to physical activity for CYP. The aim is for CYP to learn to have a lifelong positive attitude to physical activity and to lead healthy active lifestyles through their lifetime. We are unique to other leisure providers as we have a team of highly experienced qualified PE teachers that can deliver Physical Education in the school setting, they are able to assess and ensure that all delivery is differentiated to deliver an inclusive, broad and balanced curriculum, that is child centered, our ethos is not only to support physical development of CYP but also the emotional wellbeing, thus developing a positive mindset and resilient attitude. We build on the fundamental skills of physical literacy to ensure the correct skill sets are clearly embedded. We deliver the national School Games Programme which gives CYP from Y3-Y12 opportunities to not only compete but also to gain experience in leadership and volunteering.

As well as delivering Continued Professional Development (CPD) in the school setting to upskill non specialist teachers we also deliver external CPD, to date this has predominately been in the Primary setting but we have been fortunate to secure DFE (Department for Education) funding to extend this into the Secondary setting from September 2021.

Our out of school hours, extra-curricular and school holiday programmes aim to support the requirement of every CYP to participate in 60 minutes of daily physical activity as recommended by the Chief Medical Officer (CMO). We have collaborated with stakeholders to fund places for CYP in low socio-economic groups as well as other targeted groups within the county e.g., SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities), BAME (Black Asian Minority Ethnic) and LGBT. Post pandemic we aim to increase our holiday offer across the estate.

### Empowering people and communities:

Coming out of the pandemic we are anticipating a huge rise within our communities of people suffering with mental health issues. For several years, we have hosted community Health Walks across the County for persons of all ages. The health walks program is free to access and is a great way for the residents of Northumberland to become more active whilst also enjoying the social interaction both of which are vitally important when trying to tackle mental health problems.

Our aim is to encourage residents to utilise the County's vast open spaces for their physical health, but also create a support group for their mental health. Due to the scale of the groups, we rely on the support of walking volunteers, unfortunately some of which due to the pandemic are now no longer to volunteer for us.

Our aim for 2021-2022 is to use the develop and upskill of our walking volunteers using the Train the Trainer model. Volunteers will pair with Walk Leaders and in time lead the community Health Walks. Not only will this provide increased support for the Health Walks, but it will also create a positive impact within our communities and our volunteer workforce.

Similarly, our aim is to expand our organisation's current volunteer workforce into other areas of the organisation, such as gym support. Our volunteers will be able to support those who feel nervous about visiting our facilities offering a "buddy service" to make them feel at ease.

#### Tackling some of the wider determinants of health:

We are continuing to work closely with our partners to strengthen the services we provide to the public as preventative services. It has been proven that GP exercise on referral services such as Cardio Rehabilitation can successfully be delivered within a leisure environment at a significantly reduced cost compared to NHS interventions, whilst also preventing further long-term recurrent costs to the NHS. We are now focusing on a new preventative weight programme called Momenta to support obesity, diabetes and weight management. We have received some additional funding from our strategic partners in Public Health to support us with this program over the next 12 months, to ensure people whose weight condition has suffered because of the pandemic can be supported. We will be opening the scheme up to a self-referral process removing the need for participants to be referred by a medical practitioner and targeting those communities living in the more rural areas of our county. This service will be provided within our facilities as well as in some community settings and via our online platform, with the hope to increase health and wellbeing and reduce recurrent NHS costs. We're also focusing on the Obesity Strategy to ensure children in Northumberland receive 60 active minutes per day. We will not only be focusing to support this strategy within our facilities, but also utilising our specialist PE teachers to support Northumberland schools.

Although we advocate how exercise can provide significant benefits to our physical health and wellbeing, we also understand that our facility and community-based environments also influence and increase the impact we can have upon our community's mental health. We are currently rebranding and remodeling our catering outlets under our new name HIVE. Our catering outlets will promote good nutrition and the importance of hydration within our sites. It will have a significant impact upon our customer's dietary choices, supporting the healthy eating agenda, and provide a place for residents of Northumberland to congregate in an environment that supports good mental health. It will ensure the public has a sense of belonging and in turn we will reduce the feeling of isolation and loneliness within our communities.

We can further develop our commitment to reducing isolation and loneliness through developing a network of talking tables across our Hive outlets and encouraging interaction at these identified points.

We also recognise that our employees often have their own health struggles and shall continue to ensure that we are able to recognise any support that is needed and direct them quickly and efficiently to the proper support channels, utilising the partnership that we have with Occupational Health. We shall also continue to offer every employee the support of Westfield Health, a platform where staff are able to access their own support ranging from GP (General Practitioner) appointments to open forums on mental health struggles.

#### Adopting a whole system approach to health and social care:

Active Northumberland will continue to work collaboratively with our partners in Public Health and other Health & Wellbeing organisations to ensure we continue to promote the benefits of physical activity and help remove the barriers of access to our knowledge and facilities.

The demands on our Health & Social care system are currently at an all-time high and we expect these to continue to rise as a result of the pandemic, but through collaborative working in educating our communities to adopt new behaviour changes through physical activity and a healthy diet in order to optimise their own personal health & wellbeing we hope will help alleviate some of the pressure that is currently facing them.

We will communicate this message through our website and social media channels, utilising our members experience/testimonials to advocate the benefits our service has had on their own personal Health & wellbeing.

We will continue to work with our partners in Public Health to develop our already very successful Exercise on Referral scheme. Using the data, we collect from the participants attending the scheme we will show the impact the scheme is having on both the individual and the wider community.

We will continue to look at ways to develop our early intervention scheme and how we may be able to work with other key partners like the NHS, Escape Pain, Cancer UK, Diabetes UK to again educate these customers who are suffering from such long-term conditions on how physical activity can support them in managing and improving their condition.

Staff development will continue to be a focus in the coming 12 months. We will work with our partners at NCC & Future Fit to ensure that our teams receive the training they require to deliver the service we aspire to deliver. Behaviour Change and MECC (Make Every Contact Count) training will be a key priority in 2021.

## Active Northumberland – Service Plan 2022-2023:

Our service plan outlines our intentions to achieve our objectives and improve our organisation within 202-2023.

### Improving service quality:

We continue to improve the appearance of the physical facilities, maintaining equipment, cleanliness of the facilities, and communication materials. We focus on our ability to perform the promised service that we strive to deliver every day and take pride in everything we do. We will engage & communicate with strategic partners and our Health & Wellness team to embed a customer journey that is personalised to the individual needs of the customer.

The increased uptake on our social media continues to grow, the marketing plan allows us to track the content on a weekly basis with KPIs to track improvement and engagement. This also allows us to have comparable information year on year. Sales campaigns are evaluated through a SWOT analysis to understand the impact and customer needs. We will become less transactionally and more focused on improving customer loyalty which in turn will have a significant impact on improving lives.

"Our values of FUN, INCLUSION and TRUST drive our culture, which is fundamental to achieving our vision "to be the best community leisure and wellness provider in the UK".

Through our technology and systems, we can identify and map customer trends to understand preferences. Through brand recognition, improving our people's skill set, product knowledge and increased customer interaction we aim to always deliver an outstanding service.

### Improving operational efficiency:

Operational efficiency improvements across the whole portfolio can be read in conjunction with reducing public subsidy through planned actions such as reviewing the operational cost of each facility, undertaking an organisational staffing review and maximising income opportunities through the leisure capital investment programme.

This section will, therefore, focus on how the Company plans to operate in a more efficient manner, with the potential to reduce public subsidy.

Operating during Covid-19 forced Active Northumberland to constantly review staffing requirements to deliver a service that was based upon operating within severe restrictions, whilst maximising the Job Retention Scheme. We also had to find alternative methods of delivering activities to customers who were unable to access facilities or leave their homes.

In 2022-23, we plan to use the learning from the Pandemic to improve our operational efficiency post pandemic, and in line with a new management agreement with NCC.

We will, therefore, improve our operational efficiency through reviewing our participation levels post pandemic and implement a revised staffing model that meets the needs of either reduced or increased footfall.

We will continue to make most of our activities pre-bookable to encourage customers to pre-book and pre-pay for activities in advance of visiting our facilities, thereby reducing queues at reception and improving the visitor experience for our customers.

Pre-bookable activities will also allow for greater flexibility with staffing models and requirements by setting limits in line with industry legislation.

In conjunction with pre-bookable activities, we aspire to make all our facilities cashless sites, reducing the requirement for cash handling and cash collection.

We will ensure that we implement a programme of activities that reduces periods of closures to allow for cleaning and sanitisation of activity areas.

We will aim to reduce our energy costs, government guidance permitting, to allow for recirculation of heated air within our facilities and to reduce plant operating times to pre-pandemic levels.

We will improve operating efficiency by ensuring that our people are appropriately trained and provided with all the information that they need to undertake their roles. We will achieve this through the creation of a platform that will hold our policies and procedures, training records and allow our people to virtually access mandatory training. Our people will be required to undertake competency-based tests, that will underpin the robust training programme and knowledge base.

By 2022-23, our Performance Management Policy will have been fully embedded into the Organisation and our people will working to personal development plans, to improve performance whilst encouraging individuals to maximise their potential.

We will strive to reduce absence across the Company through ensuring that our teams are fully equipped to use Fusion to record and report on absence, allowing absence reduction targets to be set. We will use our Performance Management Policy as a tool to manage absence levels.

We shall measure our operational performance via a series of key performance indicators that can be benchmarked within the industry and through using external audits to measure our improvement journey. We will aim to have our larger sites Quest accredited by the end of 2023, to provide quality assurance to NCC.

We shall engage our workforce through providing full visibility of key performance indicators monthly that will display progress towards targets.

By 2022-23 we will have implemented a succession plan that will ensure that, should key people leave the Organisation, knowledge and skills are retained within the Company. We will also have a full set of process documents in place to ensure that operations are maintained to a high standard.

We shall continue to use our professional knowledge and experience to influence and inform the decision-making process around capital development programmes to ensure that, where practical, investment has the capacity to reduce operating costs.

In 2021-22, we plan to utilise our learning through the pandemic and continue to improve our service to our customers through utilising digital channels and front-end technology. We will aim to reduce queues at our receptions through expanding our digital service for stay-at-home users and expanding our use of kiosks. This will improve front of house to improve ease of access. Our digital service will allow communities to participate in some of our activities without leaving their homes and will assist the Councils health and wellbeing agenda to provide a service for the hard-to-reach communities.

As part of our organisational review, we have reviewed how we currently outsource our direct debit collection to a third party; with a view to managing this process from our Head Office, providing a more efficient and tailored service for our communities, delivered by local people. We shall capture customer needs through their feedback and translate critical customer requirements into key metrics, providing an effective management tool for improvement. We shall capture this information via comments and an annual survey of customers.

#### Improving service usage and retention:

As we look towards coming out of the other side of a national pandemic, one of Active Northumberland's key priorities over the next 12 months is that of member engagement and customer retention. One of the key positives to take from the pandemic is that it has enabled us to put processes in place where we are able to get much more accurate data and therefore a better understanding of our customer usage and engagement levels.

Since returning from the national lockdown, we have taken this opportunity to hit the reset button and work with all front of house teams to improve on customer service. Getting back to some of the real basics that make a dramatic difference to the member experience such as acknowledging every customer that walks through our doors, being responsive to customer feedback and supporting customers with the Health & Fitness goals.

We have continued to invest in the TechnoGym - MyWellness platform with 5 of our facilities now fully integrated with the TG Journey system, and we hope the remaining 4 facilities will come onboard throughout 2021/22. We will use this platform for member engagement through both automated communications and in person customer engagement within the facilities. We will also use the platform to develop monthly challenges for our members whereby they will be able to compete against each other within their own facilities but also

contribute towards their facility totals when competing against other facilities creating that community team ethos that is a great benefit when looking to improve retention.

We will continue to embed and develop our member journey to ensure that our customers are receiving the support they require in order to achieve their Health & Wellness goals. By using the Technogym platform, we can monitor important elements of the member journey such as the quality of the interaction between the gym member of staff and the member, the quality of program the customer has received and probably the most important factor is the number of times they are frequenting the facility. We will use this data to set staff KPI's and reach out to members who aren't visiting or who are struggling with program adherence.

Over the next 12 months we will also explore opportunities to develop a Personal Training model on our gym floors whereby those customers wanting access to additional support will be able to do so. Whilst generally PT is only undertaken by 5% of members, across the organisation this offer would enable us to support a lot of members who may otherwise leave us due to the lack of support we currently offer.

Group-X will continue to play a key role in our member retention strategy. The pandemic again has forced us to be a lot more creative when it comes to Group-X, utilising online streaming to reach out to our members. Whilst customer access to online provision as slowed down considerably since the facilities reopened, we strongly believe that moving forward as we come out of the pandemic that it will be a customer expectation for us to supply an element of online experience. We will shift our immediate focus to the "on-demand" element of Group-x online whereby customers who are unable to attend our facilities can participate in a class from the comfort of their own home at their convenience but still with the benefit of a familiar instructor. We will also explore options for streaming our in-facility classes "live" online at the same time.

We will continue to monitor our Group-X program to ensure the program delivers what our members demand. We will look to create opportunities for our new members to take part in group exercise as the current data suggest that this is an area we need to address. We will look to do this through our member consultations whereby instructors will signpost new members to activities outside of the gym floor including group-x and wet side activities.

#### Improving the community representativeness of service:

The 'Mams on the Move' project, which primarily aims to tackle inactivity in postnatal women with a strong focus on upskilling and educating health professionals on the details associated with the health and wellbeing of these women in the vulnerable postnatal stage, is continuing to develop and thrive.

After the success of previous years, we have made some excellent progress and communications with our partners within the NHS and public health domains. Recovering and living in a new way of life from the coronavirus pandemic there will be an even stronger focus on supporting vulnerable groups to help overcome developed anxieties and fears.

Our next steps to achieve this are to create networks of support volunteers. These groups will be primarily postnatal women themselves who have had their children and our themselves giving something back to the community. We will be working with a group of breastfeeding

volunteers who have completed a series of training programmes which will have equipped them with the knowledge and skills to lead outdoor buggy walks.

Another aspect of the project, again working with our partners, will be the training elements that we have been developing over the last year. We will be undertaking training with midwifery teams across Northumbria; upskilling staff on the importance of physical activity in the antenatal and postnatal period. The evidence behind upskilling staff helps give women the confidence to exercise as they acknowledge a health professional has approved. We are using the 'More than Medicine' approach where staff will be prescribing and referring physical activity. The NHS staff will be able to refer women to our classes knowing we can take those added pressures and strains from the overall trust.

#### Improving service user satisfaction:

The customer platform we use allows us to effectively report, analyse, manage, and adapt to all our customer's feedback. We strive to continually improve our service and we can only do this if we understand which areas we need to improve on. The feedback gives us the opportunity to turn a negative comment into a positive outcome whilst maintaining the customer's faith in Active Northumberland.

The reports are summarised per site monthly which is then updated at the Board quarterly meetings.

We issue our Customer Satisfaction Survey twice a year to retrieve our Net Promoter Score which is benchmarked nationally. We have introduced new surveys to ensure we receive more qualitative feedback from our customers. The surveys are themed to ensure we target areas of improvement.

#### Improving employee satisfaction:

It is our intention that by the end of 2022/23, we will have a workforce that is not heavily reliant on casual staff, and we will improve employee satisfaction by having a contracted workforce.

Work undertaken as part of the Job Retention Scheme has allowed the Company to identify the number of true casuals and non-true casuals (entitled to contracts) within the Organisation and work will commence from October to offer non-true casuals an appropriate contract and subsequently improve the ratio of contracted to non-contracted staff.

This will improve operational planning and efficiency, whilst also improving morale for those who are entitled to a contract.

With the implementation of our Performance Management Policy, we aim to have given every member of staff an appraisal within the next 12 months, that will lead to the creation of a personal development plan tied into the objectives and values of the Company. We would like to see this progress reflected in staff satisfaction surveys in 2022/23.

In line with NCC objectives, we remain committed to learning and developing our people. With an agreement now in place with a training provider, Future Fit, we aim to produce a personal training plan for every job role and individual, to allow the Company to have a highly skilled and high willed workforce by March 2023.

As part of our drive to ensure that our staff feel safe and valued, we will continue to invest in their health and wellbeing through allowing free access to our facilities and continuing with providing free access Westfield Health benefits; a scheme that places the needs of the workforce at the forefront of our health and wellbeing strategy.

We will continue to improve our communication strategy with our people in order to inform them as to any developments within the Company and to recognise outstanding work by teams or individuals.

We will review our staff awards night in 2021/22 and ensure that we continue to build bigger and better in 2022/23, to recognise the valuable contribution that our people make to our local communities.

The success of improving employee satisfaction will be measured through an employee survey, with feedback used as an improvement tool. We have chosen 'Great Places to Work' as our survey partner in order to be able to obtain detailed information from colleagues on our performance and enables us to be benchmarked nationally as an organisation.

#### Reducing environmental impact:

In June 2019, Northumberland Council declared a climate emergency and developed an action plan that set out a commitment to reducing the County's carbon footprint by half by 2025.

To support NCC with their commitment, we aim to focus on our commitment to reducing our energy costs within the same time frame.

During the current year (2021-22), we shall have produced our three-year Environmental Plan (2021-24), detailing how we intend to reduce our impact upon the environment during the lifecycle of the plan.

We shall be working this year to ensure that we have baseline data in place in order that we can set reduction targets for 2022-23.

We shall report on key performance indicators on a monthly basis through our performance outcomes framework, to allow us to respond to poor performance or unexpected spikes.

Our Environmental Plan shall commit to reducing utility consumption, the amount of waste that is sent to landfill and reduce our transport emissions.

We aim to send 20% less general waste to landfill by the end of 2023.

To compliment the introduction of site-specific energy champions, an Energy and Environmental Procedure is being created. This will provide guidance, set standards and provide consistency across the estate as well as provide a toolbox for the energy champions.

We shall strive to reduce our DEC score through the continued investment in the estate and installation of energy saving measures. Our average DEC score is 11 points lower than the National Average and we aim to reduce this further once new facilities are open.

As part of our continuous improvement ethos, we will commence work on obtaining external accreditation for Energy Management (IOS 5001).

We shall continue with our commitment to reduce the amount of single use plastic that we use within our facilities (pool shoe covers, plastic cutlery) and strive to increase the amount of compostable packaging and utensils that we use in all our catering outlets.

#### Reducing public subsidy:

The public sector faces unprecedented financial, health and social challenges because of the national pandemic and the subsidy required to operate the Company during this period increased due to enforced facility closures, the inability to offer a full programme of activities and reduced capacities due to social restrictions and national guidance.

Against the financial demands faced by the Council and the Company, we believe that Active Northumberland is best placed to help the Council meet these health and social challenges and to help readdress health inequalities and to help break down barriers to enable residents who are socially excluded, disadvantaged, isolated and vulnerable to participate in physical activities to achieve their wellness goals.

We will work with the Council towards implementing a new management agreement to run concurrently from when the current agreement ends in March 2022, reviewing the services that Active Northumberland should provide to support NCC with readdressing health and social inequalities across Northumberland.

We will work towards seeking a longer management arrangement that provides stability and assurance for our workforce, but also allows for a reduced subsidy arrangement over a fixed period, considering the current position of the Company during the pandemic, whilst also realising new income opportunities that can be created with the completion of new leisure facilities in Berwick (Autumn 2022) and Morpeth (January 2023).

We will continue to reduce the subsidy required to operate the Company through increasing our income levels to pre-pandemic levels, based upon the ability to operate without any closures or imposed restrictions, such as social distancing measures.

We will aim to recover any memberships that were cancelled during the pandemic and rebuild our membership base to drive income growth. This will be supported by converting free memberships for NCC Employees into paid members.

We will rebuild our learn to swim programme from the current position where sessions are delivered at certain pools only and make sure that all sites offer lessons for residents, and we will increase the number of places available in the scheme by the creation of new classes within the new swimming pools.

As our utility costs are our second largest item of expenditure, we will continue to work with NCC to ensure that we procure the best prices available for units of energy and water and will set consumption reduction targets for each facility, utilising technology to reduce consumption, where possible.

We aim to reduce increased costs that have been essential to manage through the pandemic and hopefully be able to reduce spend on PPE (PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT) across the estate and reducing current ventilation demands required to operate safely.

We will continue to monitor our staffing requirements required to deliver the service and ensure that we operate with an efficient but effective workforce.

#### Growing revenue:

Income growth will be driven in part by improved marketing, improved digital services and the performance of the contact (call) centre. We will deliver marketing campaigns to increase memberships and participation. Our online capability will improve which will support sales growth, new HIVE brand implementation for our cafes, and family activities.

The contact (call) centre team continue to improve customer service as we learn and evolve every day, the data collected will help us to develop this through analysis to identify trends used to inform improvements to services and processes.

Income figures and membership numbers indicate that proper investment can drive revenue growth within leisure facilities. With £65 million of capital investment coming to fruition over the next two years, the challenge will be for Ponteland, Morpeth and Berwick to significantly increase their income, without re-cycling memberships from other sites.

The new Ponteland Leisure Centre is a huge asset to Active. The 6 Lane 25m pool and the separate studio pool has increased our usable water space by 60% over the old pool. However, with the opening of Ponteland during a pandemic it has placed significant pressures on the LTS (Learn to Swim) scheme and the potential to maximise income owing to restricted class provision and reduced lesson capacity. Since opening in December 2020, the programme has increased its participation number from 537 to 675 at the end of May. Opportunities for growth in the lower Stage classes has been maximised with 99% occupancy in the Stage 1 classes, we are struggling to move them through the scheme fast enough to

keep up with demand. The easing of restrictions and the removal of the 15-minute cleaning breaks between lessons we can increase our capacity by 8 additional lessons per night without increasing our staffing costs allowing us to focus on class provision based on demand.

The new Berwick Leisure Centre with the more traditional 5 lane configuration and the Studio pool with the boom and moveable floor will allow us to utilise this for the pre-school framework, lower stages of LTS, adult lessons and the aquatic exercise provision whilst still offering a leisure pool experience and the capacity for customers to swim in the main pool.

The new Morpeth Leisure Centre will increase usable water space by 90%. With the Studio pools movable floor, we can utilise this to offer a wide range lessons and classes significantly increasing our offer for the Riverside members once the project has been completed.

It is anticipated that the design of the new facilities will also provide opportunities to increase income opportunities through working with partners to deliver services differently and realise new income streams that will be mutually beneficial to both AN and NCC

Certain areas in Northumberland have had huge investment in housing developments which will increase the footfall into our Leisure facilities within the communities.

#### Ensuring performance against budget profile:

Active Northumberland recognises that during these uncertain times it is imperative to be able to map performance against budget profile, especially as it is currently difficult to predict external factors that will affect performance in 2021-22. We will therefore work with the finance team from NCC to establish a financial model that will help with budget forecasting, utilising real time data pulled from our CRM system, to allow us to efficiently monitor and forecast budget performance.

This will be reinforced with monthly meetings between finance account managers and budget holders in order that there is sufficient two-way flow of information to understand performance against budget. This will also be underpinned through the introduction of a performance management framework, which will not only involve performance measurement systems and processes but also lay the foundations for managing people and the way they work across the Company.

#### Attracting external grant support:

Our employees have a wealth of health and wellbeing knowledge that can benefit the communities within the County. We will therefore continue and increase our contribution to consultative discussions with Northumberland County Council, NHS Trusts and other key partners to consider and further support new ways of providing sustainable services to improve public health, and by doing so reduce the rising demands on the health and social care system.

We recognise that community health and wellbeing issues differ throughout Northumberland as a result of the County's sociological perspective and demographic. Working collaboratively with the County's Town Councils, we can support the delivery of common social outcomes and form a foundation for communities to build on. We have already successfully obtained funding via partners such as Sport England to successfully deliver the School Games, Secondary Teacher Training and Mams on the Move, that play a vital role in our communities. We're committed to working with our partners to secure further grant support and support and deliver programmes in our communities that will have a worthwhile social impact.

In addition, strengthening our Service Level Agreements for the delivery of PESSPA within Northumberland's First, Primary, Middle, High and Special schools can increase the ability for attracting external grant support. Schools continued to support Service Level Agreements for next academic year and committed readily as we are a trusted, quality assured provider. Additional funding from DFE to deliver a Secondary Teacher Training programme has been secured for next academic year, as well as FA funding to deliver a girls' school/community football programme in the north of the county. Working in collaboration with RISE, the active partnership, we have also been able to secure additional funding to deliver School Games programmes.

Due to the pandemic's catastrophic effect on our revenue generating abilities, Active Northumberland and Northumberland County Council submitted a bid to the National Leisure Recovery Fund. We have been successful in our application and have been granted the maximum £750k, and this money is being distributed between the 2020/21 fiscal year, and that of 2021-22.

#### Capital Investment:

Delivery of the Capital programme continues to progress across Northumberland with the roll out the £65 million investment in sport and leisure facilities. Despite the challenges that many capital projects have experienced over the past 12 months due to the Covid-19 pandemic, leisure investment work has continued to deliver achieve its key milestones.

The announced investment continues to support a number of key policy objectives for both the Council and Active Northumberland including;

- Investment to address the issues associated with operating facilities that have exceeded their economic life expectancy and would require increased investment to do no more than maintain the facility as "fit for purpose" with the opportunity to incorporate energy conservation measures into the design of more economically operational facilities.
- New or improved facilities to provide excellent quality accommodation, providing more opportunities for more people to become more active, more often and create facilities which make a substantial contribution to the improvement of the health and well-being of the population that live, work or study in Northumberland

- New or improved facilities to address the regeneration of local areas and demonstrate the Councils commitment to providing Best Value services and facilities which are affordable and accessible for everyone and provide facilities that encourages participation from groups traditionally under-represented in sport and leisure activity.
- Aim to reduce subsidy for new or improved facilities where they require less funding from the Council (for revenue operations and the maintenance of the asset over its life).

### **Ponteland Leisure Centre**

In November 2020 Ponteland Leisure opened its doors to the public for the first time. Frustratingly, due to restrictions Active were only able to provide a limited number of activities however, over the last few months and with the gradual lifting of restrictions all facilities have now opened to the public. The facility is still very much in its infancy and the team are continuing to work through a 12 month defect period with the wider project team in NCC.

### **Blyth Sports Centre Refurbishment**

During 20/21 completed works have seen the opening of a new state of the art gym and 2 new fitness studios including a virtual fitness offer, Tranquillity Spa experience as well as fresh new changing facilities. In addition, the re-development now provides a new home for Northumberland Skills Service (Blyth area) providing a range of new opportunities for adult learners and a wider more holistic approach to learning and wellbeing.

The final phase of the £5m refurbishment will be completed in September 2021 which will conclude the final phase of the development and see the opening a new Hive café, soft play facilities, group cycling studio as well as a much-improved, welcoming reception experience.

### **Berwick Leisure Centre New Build**

Designed to be built in 2 phases, phase 1 works are due for completion and opening in Autumn 2021. During 20/21 work has continued on the design and build aspects for the new leisure and swimming pool, Tranquillity Spa facilities, gym, 3 fitness studios, 4 rink indoor bowls facility, associated changing facilities and Adult Social Care provision. These facilities have been designed to meet both community and tourist needs, whilst complementing the current social care offer in Berwick. Externally the outdoor 3G pitch as completed with grant support from Football foundation and opened to the public in March 2021.

Phase 2 will commence on the completion of Phase 1 in autumn 2021 and will conclude the overall development by Summer 2022.

### **Morpeth Leisure Centre New Build**

Site works have now commenced on the Morpeth's new £21 million leisure centre and community hub on Gas House Lane and is on schedule to open early 2023.

The new centre will include a six-lane swimming pool with spectator gallery, a learner pool, Soft play facilities, new Tranquillity spa facilities and a four-court sports hall. A state-of-the-art fitness suite will be located to the 1<sup>st</sup> floor and include a range of fitness experiences such as a Functional Training area as well as the first Technogym Bio-Circuit experience in the county. The centre will also see a much-improved fitness studio offer with a dedicated cycling studio and 2 large fitness studios to deliver an enhanced group exercise and community fitness activities. Our new front of house customer experience will provide a modern and welcoming cafe and reception hub.

The centre will also incorporate a new community services hub which will include the town's library, a customer service centre and an adult learning facility.

### **Newbiggin Sports & Community Centre Refurbishment**

Work has continued to develop plans for the refurbishment at Newbiggin and during this year time has been spent on the design stage of the facility with plans approved in March 2021.

Work is due to start summer 2021 on a new £1.5 million pound scheme to refurbish and revitalise Newbiggin Sports and Community Centre with work expected to be complete in Spring 2022.

Working closely with Northumberland Communities Together (NCT) we are continuing to review a sustainable operating model for the refurbished facility, given the requirement to have a facility that meets specific community needs and create a facility that will foster greater community use.

### **Leisure Remedial Programme 2020/21**

Active Northumberland continue to work closely with the Council's Property Services department to implement a Planned Preventative Maintenance (PPM) programme which in the first instance looks to address key remedial works identified in leisure site condition surveys.

The programme priorities have identified a number of key remedial works following a review of both condition survey priorities and on-site operational input where any backlog maintenance issues could have a significant impact on key operational and financial aspirations, reduced levels of customer satisfaction and unplanned closures.

### **Re-decoration and Maintenance**

In August 2020, an internal maintenance team was created to undertake a range of re-decoration and site maintenance priorities. Due to many sites remaining closed or having limited access for customers due to covid restrictions, it was an ideal opportunity to refresh many tired facilities within minimal impact to the customer. To date a significant amount of re-

decoration has been carried out at a number of larger sites including Concordia Leisure Centre, Ashington Leisure Centre, Prudhoe Waterworld and Wentworth Leisure Centre. The trial period has proved very effective in bringing some aspects of our estate up to date, giving them a much-needed refresh. Work continues across the estate in continuing this revitalization work.

Northumberland County Council

Communities and Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Work Programme 2021-2022

## 1. Terms of reference:

- (1) To maintain an overview of the Management Agreements in place between the County Council and Active Northumberland, Woodhorn Museum Charitable Trust and Northumberland Tourism.
- (2) To monitor, review and make recommendations about:
  - Development Planning
  - Neighbourhood Planning
  - Conservation
  - Housing
  - Climate Change
  - Countryside, Biodiversity and Landscape Quality
  - Waste Management and Energy Use
  - Public and Community Transport Network and Travel to School
  - Highway Maintenance, Streetscape and the Local Environment
  - Local and Neighbourhood services
  - Crime, Community Safety, and Fear of Crime, including CONTEST, Prevent and Channel
  - Antisocial Behaviour and Domestic Violence
  - Fire and Rescue
  - Emergency Services and Emergency Planning
  - Customer Services
  - Provision of Cultural and Leisure Facilities
  - Improving Quality of Life through Access to Culture and Leisure;
  - Supporting Economic Growth in the Arts, Culture and Leisure Sectors

## 2. Issues to be Timetabled/Considered

Northumberland County Council  
Communities and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2021-2022

**4 August 2021**

**Draft Private Sector Housing Strategy 2020-23**

Pre-Scrutiny. To comment on a report to Cabinet which provides Members with the draft Private Sector Housing Strategy 2020-2023 for review and agreement.

**Active Northumberland Annual Outcome Report**

The Annual Outcome Report will contain a review on how the Active Northumberland Service Plan had been delivered for the previous financial year.

**Active Northumberland Service Plan**

To consider Active Northumberland's Service Plan 2021/22.

**25 August 2021**

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**Fleet Replacement Programme**

To consider this annual report which will provide an update on the Council's Fleet Replacement Programme.

**Kerbside Glass Recycling Trial Update**

To update the Committee on the trial following consideration of the proposals at its meeting in October 2020.

**6 October 2021**

**Domestic Violence and Abuse**

To consider the implications of the Domestic Abuse Bill which is expected to receive Royal Assent in the summer on the Council's Strategy for dealing with domestic abuse and violence.

**27 October 2021**

**Northumberland Infrastructure Funding Statement**

To consider the annual Infrastructure Funding Statement in respect of Section 106 Agreements.

<b>Customer Complaints Update</b>	To receive an update on Customer Complaints since the annual report was presented to the OSC in February.
<b>1 December 2021</b>	
<b>21 December 2021</b>	
<b>12 January 2022</b>	
<b>2 February 2022</b>	
<b>2 March 2022</b>	
<b>Library Service Strategy 2021-26</b>	To update the Committee on the implementation of the Strategy.
<b>6 April 2022</b>	
<b>27 April 2022</b>	

Northumberland County Council  
Communities and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee Monitoring Report 2021-2022

Ref	Date	Report	Decision	Outcome
1.	30 June 2021	<b>Funding for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)</b>	<b>RESOLVED</b> that, the Cabinet be advised that the Committee supported the recommendations contained in the report.	Cabinet noted the Committee's comments when it determined this report on 13 July 2021.
2.	30 June 2021	<b>Unreasonably Persistent and Vexatious Contact Policy</b>	<b>RESOLVED</b> that, subject to members' comments, the Cabinet be advised that the Committee supported the recommendations contained in the report.	Cabinet noted the Committee's comments when it determined this report on 13 July 2021.

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