

# 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, 25 January 2022

Dear Sir or Madam,

Your attendance is requested at a meeting of the **COMMUNITIES AND PLACE OSC** to be held in **MEETING SPACE - BLOCK 1, FLOOR 2 - COUNTY HALL** on **WEDNESDAY, 2 FEBRUARY 2022** at **2.00 PM**.

Yours faithfully

Daljit Lally  
Chief Executive

**To Communities and Place OSC members as follows:-**

**J Reid (Chair), M Mather (Vice-Chair), S Bridgett, E Cartie, G Castle, R Dodd, B Gallacher, C Hardy, N Morphet and M Richardson**

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 of the press and public may tweet, blog etc during the live broadcast as they would be able to during a regular Committee meeting.

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



**Daljit Lally, Chief Executive**  
County Hall, Morpeth, Northumberland, NE61 2EF  
T: 0345 600 6400  
[www.northumberland.gov.uk](http://www.northumberland.gov.uk)



## 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. 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 of 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 Legal Services at [monitoringofficer@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:monitoringofficer@northumberland.gov.uk). Please refer to the guidance on disclosures at the rear of this agenda letter.

#### 3. FORWARD PLAN OF CABINET DECISIONS

(Pages 1  
- 4)

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 8 February 2022. 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 items is Councillor Colin Horncastle, Portfolio Holder for Community Services.*

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

(Pages 5  
- 40)

The report is provided to raise awareness of the consultation and the background to the development of the NFRS Community Risk Management Plan 2022-26.

### OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY REPORTS

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

#### 5.1 Update on Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) Round 2 Inspection report into

(Pages  
41 - 50)

## **Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS)**

The report provides an update on the findings of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) following the publication of the second inspection report into Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service on 15 December 2021.

### **5.2 Empty Homes in Northumberland**

(Pages  
51 - 66)

The report provides an overview for members regarding the issue of empty homes in the county, the measures the Council are undertaking to bring them into use and the challenges that this represents.

### **5.3 Northumberland Infrastructure Funding Statement**

(Pages  
67 - 94)

The Northumberland Infrastructure Funding Statement, which reports on developer contributions (via Section 106 agreements) was submitted to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, in December 2021. The purpose of this report is to explain the Infrastructure Funding Statement and summarise what it reported for the year 2020 / 2021.

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

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

(Pages  
95 - 100)

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.

### **7. 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.**

This page is intentionally left blank

# Agenda Item 3

## FORWARD PLAN OF FORTHCOMING CABINET DECISIONS FEBRUARY TO MAY 2022

| DECISION   | PROPOSED SCRUTINY DATE              | CABINET DATE  |
|--|-------------------------------------|---|
| <p><b>Revenues and Benefits Policies for 2022/23</b><br/>The report sets out the policies that the Revenues and Benefits services operate for the administration of council tax, business rates, housing benefit and council tax support.<br/>The report is for information and approval of any updates or legislation changes that need to be made.<br/>(R. Wearmouth/G. Barnes - 01670 624351)</p>                   | <p>CSEG OSC<br/>7 February 2022</p> | <p>8 February 2022<br/>Council 23 February 2022</p> |
| <p><b>Budget 2022-23 and Medium Term Financial Plan 2022-25</b><br/>The report presents the updated Budget 2022-23 and Medium Term Financial Plan 2022-25 to Cabinet following the receipt of the provisional local government settlement which is due to be announced during December 2021. The report will also include an update on the deliverability of savings.<br/>(R. Wearmouth/ A. Elsdon - 01670 622168)</p> | <p>CSEG OSC<br/>7 February 2022</p> | <p>8 February 2022<br/>Council 23 February 2022</p> |
| <p><b>School Admission Arrangements</b><br/>The report informs Cabinet of the outcomes of the consultation on School Admission Arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools for the 2023/24 Academic Year as required by the School Admissions Code 2021. Approval (determination) of these admission arrangements is also sought.<br/>(G. Renner Thompson/S. Aviston - 01670 622281)</p>               | <p>FACS OSC<br/>3 February 2022</p> | <p>8 February 2022</p>                              |
| <p><b>The Northumberland Line</b><br/>To confirm receipt of Restoring Your Railway (RYR) funding from the Department for Transport (DfT)<br/>(W. Ploszaj/S. McNaughton - 07827 873139)</p>   | <p>CSEG OSC<br/>7 February 2022</p> | <p>8 February 2022</p>                              |

|  |                                   |                        |
|--|-----------------------------------|------------------------|
| (Confidential report)  |                                   |                        |
| <p><b>Leisure Review – Phase 1</b><br/> To request approval for the extension of the current Active Northumberland contract by twelve months to undertake a legal procurement exercise. The contract naturally expires on 31 March 2022<br/> (J. Watson/ M. Taylor 01670 622430)<br/> (Confidential report)</p>  | <p>CP OSC<br/> 2 March 2022</p>   | <p>8 February 2022</p> |
| <p><b>Trading Companies’ Financial Performance 2021-22 - Position at the end of December 2021</b><br/> The purpose of the report is to ensure that the Cabinet is informed of the current financial positions of its trading companies for 2021-22<br/> (R. Wearmouth/M. Calvert - 01670 620197)<br/> (Confidential report)</p>  | <p>CSEG OSC<br/> 7 March 2022</p> | <p>8 March 2022</p>    |
| <p><b>Bus Service Improvement Plan/Enhanced Partnership</b><br/> For Cabinet to approve, subsequent to a prior consultation and objection period and statutory consultation period, the proposed Enhanced Plan and Scheme(s). The Enhanced Plan and Scheme is a proposed statutory partnership with regard to a statutory transport plan including the Bus Service Improvement Plan. Cabinet would have to approve prior to these being considered by the Joint Transport Committee on 15 March 2022. The Enhanced Plan and Scheme (s) need to be approved by deadline imposed by Central Government of 1st April 2022.<br/> (W. Ploszaj/R. O’Farrell/H. Lancaster – 01670 623323)</p> | <p>CP OSC<br/> 2 March 2022</p>   | <p>8 March 2022</p>    |
| <p><b>Financial Performance 2021-22 - Position at the end of December 2021</b><br/> The report will provide Cabinet with the revenue financial position as at 31 December 2021 for the Council against the Budget for 2021-22.<br/> (R. Wearmouth/S. Dent 01670 625515)</p>  | <p>N/A</p>                        | <p>8 March 2022</p>    |



|  |                           |               |
|--|---------------------------|---------------|
| <p><b>Community Chest 2022/23</b><br/>To consider proposed changes to the operation of the Community Chest scheme in line with recommendations made by Elected Members as part of the recent review of Local Area Councils.</p> <p>(B. Flux/T. Kirsop - 07917 266864)</p>  | TBC                       | 8 March 2022  |
| <p><b>Final Decision on statutory proposals for Atkinson House</b><br/>This report sets out an analysis of the representations (responses) received from interested parties to the statutory proposal published in relation to prescribed changes for Atkinson House Special School in Seghill, a secondary provision for boys with Social, Emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs in Northumberland during the four week statutory consultation that began on 13 January and closed on 10 February 2022.</p> <p>Cabinet will be required to make a final decision on whether or not to approve the prescribed changes set out in the Statutory Proposal for implementation with effect from 1 September 2022.</p> <p>(G. Renner Thompson/S. Aviston - 01670 622281)</p> | FACS OSC<br>3 March 2022  | 8 March 2022  |
| <p><b>Blyth Relief Road</b><br/>To provide an update on progress made towards Blyth Relief Road and secure approval for next steps. The report will outline:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Route alignment proposals</li> <li>- Key information from the Outline Business Case</li> <li>- Next steps</li> </ul> <p>(W. Ploszaj/S. McNaughton 07827 873139)</p>  | CSEG OSC<br>11 April 2022 | 12 April 2022 |
| <p><b>Financial Performance 2021-22 – Provisional Outturn 2021-22</b><br/>The report will provide Cabinet with the</p>   | N/A                       | 7 June 2022   |

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| revenue financial position as at<br>Provisional Outturn for the Council<br>against the Budget for 2021-22<br>(R. Wearmouth/S. Dent 01670 625515) |  |  |
|--|--|--|



## Northumberland County Council

COMMITTEE: CABINET

DATE: 25 JANUARY 2022

---

TITLE OF REPORT: Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS):  
Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) 2022-26 Consultation

**Report of** Chief Fire Officer Paul Hedley

**Cabinet Member:** Councillor Colin Horncastle, Cabinet Member for Community Services and Fire Authority Chair

### **Purpose of report**

Following guidance from Northumberland County Council (NCC) Legal and Democratic Services, the NFRS Community Risk Management Plan 2022-26 is being presented as part of the consultation process which opens on 5 January 2022 and closes on 16 February 2022.

This report is to ensure that Cabinet are aware of the consultation and the background to the development of the NFRS Community Risk Management Plan 2022-26

### **Recommendations**

It is recommended that Senior Officers have the opportunity, should Cabinet wish, to present our Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service Community Risk Management Plan 2022-26, and that Cabinet Members contribute to the consultation.

It is acknowledged that Cabinet members may have been in receipt of the CRMP presentation and update from Chief Fire Officer Hedley and other senior officers during their attendance at their respective Local Area Councils.

### **Link to Corporate Plan**

Living – ‘we want you to feel safe, healthy and cared for’.

## Key issues

1. Under the [Fire and Rescue National Framework for England](#) (2018) all fire and rescue authorities have a statutory duty to produce an Integrated Risk Management Plan. This is now called a Community Risk Management Plan.
2. According to the framework, each plan must:
  - a. Reflect up to date risk analyses including an assessment of all foreseeable fire and rescue related risks that could affect the area of the authority.
  - b. Demonstrate how prevention, protection and response activities will best be used to prevent fires and other incidents and mitigate the impact of identified risks on its communities, through authorities working either individually or collectively, in a way that makes best use of available resources.
  - c. Outline required service delivery outcomes including the allocation of resources for the mitigation of risks.
  - d. Set out its management strategy and risk-based programme for enforcing the provisions of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 in accordance with the principles of better regulation set out in the Statutory Code of Compliance for Regulators, and the Enforcement Concordat.
  - e. Cover at least a three-year time span and be reviewed and revised as often as it is necessary to ensure that the authority is able to deliver the requirements set out in this Framework.
  - f. Reflect effective consultation throughout its development and at all review stages with the community, its workforce and representative bodies and partners.
  - g. Be easily accessible and publicly available.
3. The consultation has been publicised internally across NCC, across local and regional media outlets and has been placed on all Northumberland FRS and NCC social media platforms.
4. Although the consultation **is open to all residents and interested parties**, there are a range of stakeholders who have been specifically targeted as part of the consultation. These include.
  - a. NCC elected members
  - b. NCC Corporate partners
  - c. NCC Senior Officers and NCC Staff
  - d. NCC Staff Network Groups
  - e. NFRS Staff
  - f. Other Fire and Rescue Services
  - g. Northumberland Businesses
  - h. Emergency Service partners - Police / NEAS / MRT / HMG / RNLI
  - i. HMICFRS
  - j. Corporate Partners

## **Background**

1. Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service Integrated Risk Management Plan 2017-21 was extended by one year.
2. The rationale behind extending the plan for one year were presented to Execs/Cabinet in a previous report in December 2020. The reasons were deemed to *'have merit'* by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS).
3. Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service is now consulting on its Community Risk Management Plan 2022-26, supporting the Fire Authority to meet its responsibilities under the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England (2018).
4. This plan was previously known as the Fire and Rescue (or Integrated Risk Management) Plan.
5. Consultation opens on 5 January 2022 and closes on 16 February 2022.
6. Consultation questions can be completed online by clicking the link <https://haveyoursay.northumberland.gov.uk/nfrs/crmpconsultation2022/> or by email [fireconsult@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:fireconsult@northumberland.gov.uk) to request a hard copy.
7. Copies of the consultation questions can be provided in an alternative language on request. Please email your request to [fireconsult@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:fireconsult@northumberland.gov.uk).
8. The Community Risk Management Plan 2022-26 has now been developed, providing data and analysis on key fire and rescue related risks, and information on how Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service will work with communities to address and mitigate those risks.
9. It is important to note that the CRMP is reviewed annually to ensure that it remains fit for purpose, can respond to new and emerging risk and is flexible and able to react appropriately to unforeseen events and impacts. Where the annual review results in new priorities or actions there may be a requirement to undertake additional consultation.
10. [Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services \(HMICFRS\) report Fire & Rescue Service 2021/22 Effectiveness, efficiency and people: An inspection of Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service](#) states that *'the service budget is now funded at a level that allows it to meet local risks'* (P27). As such, the Community Risk Management Plan 2022-26 is a plan of improvement, aspiration and collaboration.
11. The Service has a Performance and Assurance Framework (PAF), which has been developed to ensure that we deliver the aims and priorities as outlined in the Community Risk Management Plan 2022-26. The PAF will ensure a more focused and mature approach to managing the Service and will facilitate a golden thread from Service Leadership Team and Strategic Performance Board, through to department and station plans and individual objectives. Progress against priorities will be monitored monthly using a Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP).
12. Emerging risks such as the development of BritishVOLT and the Ashington, Blyth and Tyne rain line, an increasing frequency of extreme weather events, and Northumberland's ageing population will lead us to work more collaboratively and develop new or enhanced partnerships with internal (NCC), local and national partners in shaping our offering to the communities of Northumberland. For instance, for the first time we are co-developing our Safe and Wellbeing Programme policy with partners from across Northumberland County Council, Social Care and the third sector, focussing on our joint priorities of smoking, alcohol, dementia and falls.

13. Our six priorities for 2022-23 are as follows:
- Deliver service improvement as outlined in our Continuous Improvement Plan.
  - Deliver the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) risk model for dwelling fires as a pilot in Northumberland.
  - Undertake a review of protection delivery across the organisation utilising the NFCC Fire Standard and Implementation Tool.
  - Undertake a review of prevention delivery across the organisation utilising the NFCC Fire Standard and Implementation Tool.
  - Apply robust risk modelling to inform and further develop our community risk and response operating model.
  - Undertake a review of response standards for Northumberland.
14. Delivery of the six priorities for 2022-23 may require further consultation, and we will develop specific consultation plans for engagement as required.

### **Implications**

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Policy</b>   | The Community Risk Management Plan 2022-26 (and the annual updates) will inform all key policies for Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service.   |
| <b>Finance and value for money</b>  | The Community Risk Management Plan 2022-26 includes information on finance and how prevention, protection and community risk and response resources are utilised to remove or to mitigate key risks across the county of Northumberland. |
| <b>Legal</b>  | Northumberland Fire Authority has a legal responsibility to produce a Community Risk Management Plan, and to consult on it.  |
| <b>Procurement</b>  | N/A  |
| <b>Human Resources</b>  | N/A  |
| <b>Property</b>   | N/A  |
| <b>Equalities</b><br>(Impact Assessment attached)<br>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/><br>N/A <input type="checkbox"/> | An Equality Impact Assessment has been produced and is attached for reference. The EIA will be reviewed post consultation.   |
| <b>Risk Assessment</b>  | The Community Risk Management Plan 2022-26 is a risk-based document, capturing key fire and rescue related risks across Northumberland, and how the Service will mitigate those risks.   |

|                               |  |
|-------------------------------|--|
| <b>Crime &amp; Disorder</b>   | Details on crime and disorder are captured within the plan.  |
| <b>Customer Consideration</b> | The plan is customer focused, written to capture key risks to residents across the county, and providing details on how the Service will mitigate those risks. |
| <b>Carbon reduction</b>       | A carbon impact assessment has been completed.   |
| <b>Health and Wellbeing</b>   | Details on health and wellbeing are captured within the plan.  |
| <b>Wards</b>                  | All  |

**Background papers:**

Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service Community Risk Management Plan 2022-26.

CRMP Equality Impact Assessment.

**Report sign off.**

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

|  |                                    |
|--|------------------------------------|
|  | Full Name of Officer               |
| Monitoring Officer/Legal                     | Suki Binjal                        |
| Executive Director of Finance & S151 Officer | Jan Willis                         |
| Relevant Executive Director                  | Cath McEvoy-Carr                   |
| Chief Executive                              | Daljit Lally                       |
| Portfolio Holder(s)                          | Colin Horncastle<br>Gordon Stewart |

**Author and Contact Details**

This report was produced by Deborah Brown - NFRS Strategic Policy, Risk and Performance Officer

[Deborah.brown@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:Deborah.brown@northumberland.gov.uk)

(wk) 01670 621133

For further information contact

Chief Fire Officer Paul Hedley

[Paul.hedley@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:Paul.hedley@northumberland.gov.uk)

(wk) 01670 621114

(mb) 07702 072022

This page is intentionally left blank





**Northumberland  
Fire and Rescue Service**

# Community Risk Management Plan 2022/26



## Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service

West Hartford Business Park

Cramlington

NE23 3JP

Tel 01670 621 111

[www.northumberland.gov.uk/fire](http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/fire)



# CONTENTS

## PAGE

|    |  |
|----|--|
| 02 | Foreword   |
| 04 | Our County Profile                                     |
| 05 | Your Fire and Rescue Service                           |
| 06 | Our People   |
| 08 | Our Budget   |
| 09 | Our Community Risk Management Plan                     |
| 10 | Understanding Risk                                     |
| 12 | Dwelling Fires   |
| 13 | Automatic False Alarms in Dwellings                    |
| 14 | Outdoor Fires  |
| 15 | Wildfires  |
| 16 | Non-Residential Fires                                  |
| 17 | Automatic False Alarms<br>in Non-residential buildings |
| 17 | Road Vehicle Fires                                     |
| 18 | Road Traffic Collisions                                |
| 19 | Flooding and Water Rescue                              |
| 20 | National Resilience                                    |
| 20 | Effecting Entry/Exit                                   |
| 21 | Medical Incident – Co-responding                       |
| 21 | Marauding Terrorist Attacks                            |
| 22 | Emerging Risks   |
| 25 | Aims and Priorities                                    |
| 26 | Internal and External Assurance                        |
| 27 | Your Views   |

## FOREWORD

### Welcome to our Community Risk Management Plan

#### Welcome to Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service's (NFRS) Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) 2022-26.

As Fire Authority Chair of Northumberland County Council (NCC) and Chief Fire Officer for NFRS we are pleased to be able to provide this four year plan for our local communities, residents and visitors. The plan sets out how we intend to deliver our mission of 'Making Northumberland Safer' and to outline how we seek to give assurance that Northumberland is served by a highly efficient, highly effective and high performing fire and rescue service.

The CRMP identifies our analysis of current and future risks within the county, identifies emerging risks and trends, and outlines how we will balance prevention, protection, and response activities to reduce the impact of risk on communities by making the best use of our people and resources. We will continue to work with internal and external partners to ensure that we maintain our efforts to mature our ability to better identify, understand and analyse all of the risks we Northumberland faces.

We welcome comments on the plan and our proposals. We have worked hard to improve our social media presence and develop a bespoke NFRS website to enhance our community interaction, because improving our engagement with the public and raising awareness of all of our service activity is a priority for us.



**Cllr Colin Horncastle**  
Cabinet Member for Community Services  
and Fire Authority Chair

The Service was subject to its second independent assurance inspection from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) from mid-June – mid August 2021. Whilst the judgment was that we Require Improvement against Effectiveness, Efficiency and People, it was pleasing to note the positive comments and acknowledgements from the inspectorate of the improvements and progress we've made since 2019.

## «THE COVID PANDEMIC HIGHLIGHTED THE IMPORTANCE OF HAVING RESILIENT PLANS IN PLACE TO DEAL WITH MAJOR INCIDENTS, EMERGENCIES AND BUSINESS INTERRUPTIONS»»

Our new Performance and Assurance Framework (PAF), which was formally launched in January 2022, will be the mechanism by which we ensure we drive and assure integrated and continuous improvement in the performance, governance, and delivery of the Service.



**Paul Hedley**  
Chief Fire Officer  
and NCC Director

Strategically, we are committed to extending our reach and integration with partners into Northumberland communities and vulnerable groups to develop more effective community safety initiatives and interventions. Building more resilient, inclusive, and effective relationships with partners within NCC, Northumbria Police, the Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner (OPCC), NHS, voluntary and charity sector and other fire and rescue services (FRS) will be key to achieving that success.

As a small service covering a very large area and diverse risk, we know that maximising the availability of fire cover from our 15 fire station sites across Northumberland is fundamental to providing the Community Risk and Response capability necessary to better meet the expectations of our residents. We will be undertaking reviews of our operational response model, on-call capability and specialist response as well as looking to provide enhanced functionality through partnership and mutual aid with neighbouring FRS.

The Covid 19 pandemic highlighted the importance of having resilient plans in place to deal with major incidents, emergencies and business interruptions. In addition, the Covid 19 response also emphasised the importance of ensuring we have integrated planning and response

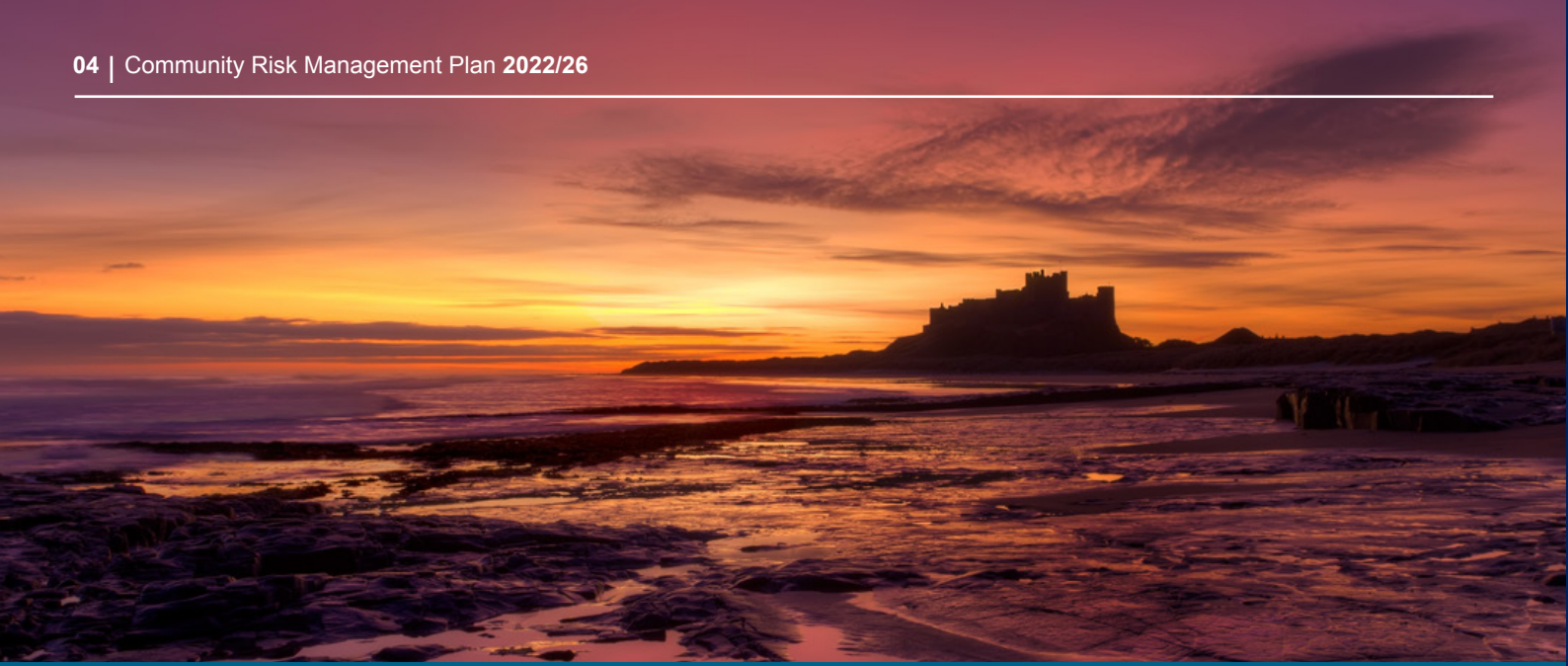
frameworks within NCC as well as effective multiagency response and mutual aid support from our Local Resilience Forum (LRF), FRS National Resilience and National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) arrangements. We will continue to review and update those arrangements to ensure they remain fit for purpose.

We have already started our ambitious plans to focus upon improving our internal staff engagement and staff development, putting our values and values-based behaviours at the heart of all we do. We continue to strive to be an 'employer of choice' within Northumberland, with a highly skilled and motivated workforce that reflects our Service values and who see our Service as an engaging, positive, and rewarding place to work. We have revised our recruitment and promotion policies to ensure we have eliminated obstacles to recruiting the brightest and best from all our communities. Our NFRS People Strategy compliments this CRMP and provides more detail on our 'All Included, All Involved and All Engaged' aspirations.

By being open and responsive to change, and through exploring and investing in new and innovative technologies and ways of working, we will continue to improve the safety and wellbeing of the diverse communities we serve.

There are many interdependencies within the CRMP planning process, and for this reason we intend to monitor our progress and review the measures set out in this document through an annual CRMP update. We are committed to ensuring our plans are always current, appropriate and detail what we have delivered, how we have performed and what our delivery priorities are for the coming year.

As Chair of the Fire and Rescue Authority and Chief Fire Officer we value your opinion and encourage you to offer feedback on our plans. We look forward to hearing from you.



## OUR COUNTY PROFILE

The county is home to major road and rail links, the Port of Blyth, modern industrial developments, one top tier Control of Major Accident Hazards (COMAH) site and two Major Accident Hazard Pipelines (MAHP).

- Northumberland covers an area of **5013 km squared**.
- We have a population of **323,820**, living in **152,000 dwellings**.
- The county is the most sparsely populated county in England with **65 people per km squared**, with **96.7 percent** of the area considered rural.
- **51 percent** of people live in **3 percent** of the area, mainly situated in the southeast.
- We have an ageing population, with the number of those aged 85+ forecast to increase by **102 percent** by 2043.
- **23 percent** of children aged 16 and under live in a family considered to be low income.
- **12 percent** of the population live in **10 percent** of the most deprived areas in England.
- **98.4 percent** of residents are white, with **92.7 percent** white British.
- **12.9 percent** of the population in Northumberland are smokers.
- Compared with England, Northumberland has **higher rates** of hospital admissions due to alcohol related problems, and the rate is rising.
- **Employment** is dominated by health, retail, and manufacturing.
- With a business community that is resilient, our biggest industries are **agriculture, forestry, fishing, construction, professional, scientific and technological services**, and **accommodation and food**.



## OUR VALUES

Our values and behaviours help us to work well together to deliver an efficient and effective service and to ensure that we look after our people and our communities.

### Our agreed values are:

- Residents first – here for you.
- Excellence and quality - listening and learning to improve your service.
- Respect – you are valued.
- Keeping communities safe and well – your safety and wellbeing is at the heart of what we do.

### Our values are underpinned by our leadership commitments:

- Be professional and provide leadership by example.
- Be open to challenge and change.
- Be fair, honest, and transparent, acting with integrity.
- Communicate openly and demonstrate empathy to all.





## OUR PEOPLE AND THE COMMUNITIES WE SERVE

**Our People Strategy was launched in May 2021, recognising that our people are our most valued asset.**

We need those people to have the right skills, qualities, values and attitude to ensure that we can meet the needs and expectations of our communities across Northumberland – by having the right people working for our residents and visitors, we have a much greater confidence of being able to fully deliver on our mission of ‘Making Northumberland Safer’. We recognise the unique role and profile we enjoy within our communities and want to enhance that conspicuous position by developing our staff as role models and community ambassadors.

By ensuring that we have a working environment where our people feel valued, listened to, empowered, and trusted, we will continue to develop as an integrated and mature organisation which works collaboratively and innovatively to support and protect our communities.

We are committed to ensuring that we are seen as an employer of choice for everyone within our communities as we recognise that

by promoting inclusion, and having a more balanced and representative workforce, we are better able to understand the needs of people from diverse backgrounds and shape our Service more effectively to meet their needs. We remain committed to taking deliberate and positive action to promote the service to underrepresented groups.

Our People Strategy is based on a set of 12 guiding principles which underpin and cut across all areas of service and six key commitments to assist in ensuring that the strategy can deliver on our strategic aims and objectives and better support the role of the Service within our council, communities and partnerships.

We recognise the importance of ethical and authentic leadership at all levels of the Service, and we will build on the significant work with staff to develop our values and behaviours as this is an essential prerequisite to demonstrating our commitment to fairness, equality, diversity, respect and continuous improvement.



### OUR COMMITMENTS

- 01 Develop a ‘learning culture’ that promotes fairness and trust, and values the contribution of all.
- 02 Recognise and demonstrate equality and diversity in our workforce and across our activities.
- 03 Encourage and promote effective leadership and management at all levels of our organisation.
- 04 Provide high quality learning outcomes for our workforce.
- 05 Promote the health, wellbeing and fitness of our staff.
- 06 Support and develop ways of working that are flexible and adaptable to changing needs/demands.



## OUR PRINCIPLES

Every fire and rescue service is unique, but whilst NFRS may have different cultural and people determinants due to our differences in leadership, governance, service delivery model and size, there are common goals and principles which should be consistent throughout the sector.

We have taken the underpinning principles within the NFCC People Strategy and Draft Code of Ethics to develop a suite of guiding principles which will be used to govern the service and shape our thinking and decision making.

**01 We want to be an employer of choice**

We will seek to position the service as a career of choice across all sectors and communities of Northumberland to attract and retain the best people. Where we identify barriers that may prevent that aspiration, whether real or perceived, we will tackle them.

**02 Our values define us**

Our core values and behaviours, personal and organisational, will underpin everything we do. We will challenge negative and undermining behaviour to ensure we are fair, consistent and honest in the way we treat each other.

**03 We always try to make a positive difference for our communities**

We will continue to make a positive contribution to the lives of our communities, residents and visitors on a daily basis – we will work to make Northumberland safer and stronger through our involvement, engagement and presence.

**04 The Health, Safety and Welfare of our staff is our priority**

The health, safety and welfare of all of our people will continue to be at the heart of all that we do. We will support the well-being of our staff through dedicated programmes and take specific action to tackle the stigma around mental health and celebrate difference.

**05 We will embrace new ways of working**

We will deliver flexible solutions that are correctly positioned to support our increasingly mobile workforce, whilst being agile enough to adapt to future changes in business requirements and working practices.

**06 We will have excellent communication**

We will build an effective internal communications framework to ensure that our messaging is honest, clear and delivered in the most appropriate format. Externally we will continue to grow our ability to engage and communicate with residents, businesses and partners.

**07 Staff Engagement and Involvement are key to our success**

We will involve our staff in decision making and policy development ensuring that they are properly engaged and consulted with regards to the future direction of the service. We recognise the importance of being able to respond to staff suggestions and the importance of every member of the service having their voice heard.

**08 We will champion equality, diversity and inclusion**

We will actively promote equality across our workforce and through our services in the community, and will try to increase the diversity and balance of our workforce through positive action programmes to ensure we reflect the communities we serve and attract the best possible talent available to us.

**09 We will develop a workforce of leaders**

We will enhance, facilitate and encourage leadership at all levels of the service, devolving responsibility and accountability to the lowest level and creating a high performance culture to improve performance and outcomes.

**10 We are a learning organisation**

We will become skilled at creating, acquiring, and transferring knowledge, and at modifying our behavior to reflect new knowledge and insights. We accept and welcome scrutiny and challenge and recognise new ideas and different thinking is essential if learning is to take place.

**11 Strong collaboration and partnership**

We will actively support working and sharing information with our partners, and will develop our relationships with partner organisations to promote and deliver services which add real public value and improve our effectiveness and efficiency.

**12 We are 'OneTeam'**

NCC's vision is 'One Council That Works For Everyone' – as part of our contribution to achieving that vision we will develop a 'One Team' culture within NFRS to break down internal barriers and encourage a collaborative and outcome focused mind-set.

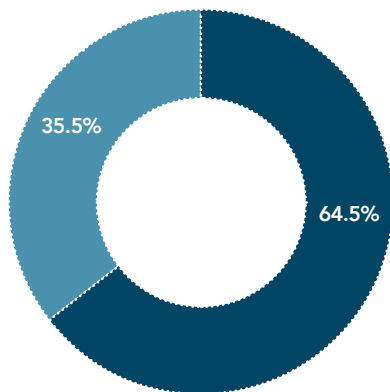


## OUR BUDGET

We had a total budget of £16,136,360 to deliver your service during 2020-21. Much of this budget was spent on our people, and this is reflected in **Chart 1** below. **Chart 2** shows how this money is spent by role. Finally, **Chart 3** shows how non-staffing budget is used to support our Prevention, Protection and Community Risk and Response activity.

### CHART 1

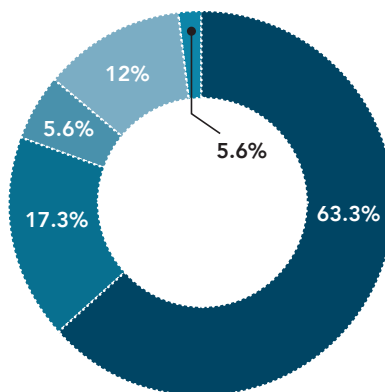
How our budget reflects staffing and non-staffing costs for 2021-22.



- Staffing cost 64.5
- Non-staffing cost 35.5

### CHART 2

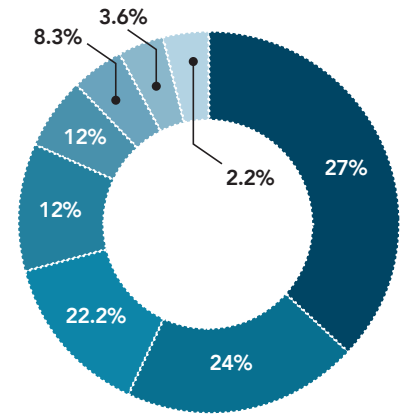
How our budget has been divided by roles during 2020/22.



- Wholetime
- Retained
- Local Government
- Control
- Other

### CHART 3

How our budget reflects non-staffing costs for 2021-22.



- PFI
- Asset depreciation
- Data and comms
- Premises related
- Supplies and services
- Third party payments
- Vehicle and travel
- Employee related



# OUR COMMUNITY RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN

## Fire and rescue authorities (FRA) have a number of duties as set out in the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004.

When carrying out their core functions under the Act, FRAs must:

- Secure the provision of personnel, services and equipment.
- Secure the provision of training for personnel.
- Secure arrangements for dealing with calls and summoning assistance.
- Secure arrangements for obtaining information for the discharging of their functions.
- Secure arrangements for reasonable steps to be taken to prevent or limit damage to property resulting from the discharge of their functions.

- To collaborate with emergency services and other local and national partners to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the service they provide.
- To be accountable to communities for the service they provide.
- To develop and maintain a workforce that is professional, resilient, skilled, flexible and diverse.

### The core functions of an FRA are:

- Promote fire safety, including the provision of information and publicity on how to prevent fires, and on the means of escape from buildings in case of fire.
- Extinguish fires and protect life and property in the event of fires.
- Rescue people and protect people from serious harm in the event of road traffic collisions.
- When necessary, deal with emergencies other than fire and road traffic collisions.

FRAs in England have further responsibilities under the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England (2018) to 'assess all foreseeable fire and rescue related risks that could affect their communities'.

### The Framework identifies five priorities for fire and rescue authorities:

- To make appropriate provision for fire prevention and protection activities and response to fire and rescue related incidents.
- To identify and assess the full range of foreseeable fire and rescue related risks their areas face.

Northumberland Fire and Rescue Authority (NFRA) is also legally responsible for the enforcement of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. The Order places a duty on a responsible person within an organisation to carry out fire risk assessments to identify, manage and reduce the risk of fire within public and commercial buildings, and in communal and external areas of residential premises with two or more dwellings.

In order to support the Fire Authority, we carry out audits of premises, provide education, advice and guidance to responsible persons on fire safety. Where serious fire safety issues are found, we will take appropriate enforcement action to improve fire safety. We will also prosecute when it is in the public interest to do so.

Under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, the FRA has a duty to work with partners in their LRF to plan and train for risks identified in a joint Community Risk Register (CRR). This assists in risk management planning, and risks identified in the CRR are reflected in our plan.

The Policing and Crime Act 2017 places a duty on police, fire and ambulance services to work together in order to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of emergency services. NFRS works in collaboration with Northumbria Police, the OPCC and, through a North East Strategic Delivery Board, the 4 North East FRS' to ensure NFRA meets its responsibilities under the Act.

Our CRMP will support change within NFRS, setting out our strategic priorities and how we intend to manage the existing and future risks within the county.

# UNDERSTANDING RISK

NFRS defines risk as a **'combination of the likelihood and consequence of a hazardous event'**. This supports the NFCC definition and strategic risk management framework.

In the case of fire and rescue related risks, hazardous events are the emergency incidents that we attend. We have a responsibility to our communities to identify what type of incidents we attend, and to work with our communities and key partners to minimise or prevent the likelihood of these happening.

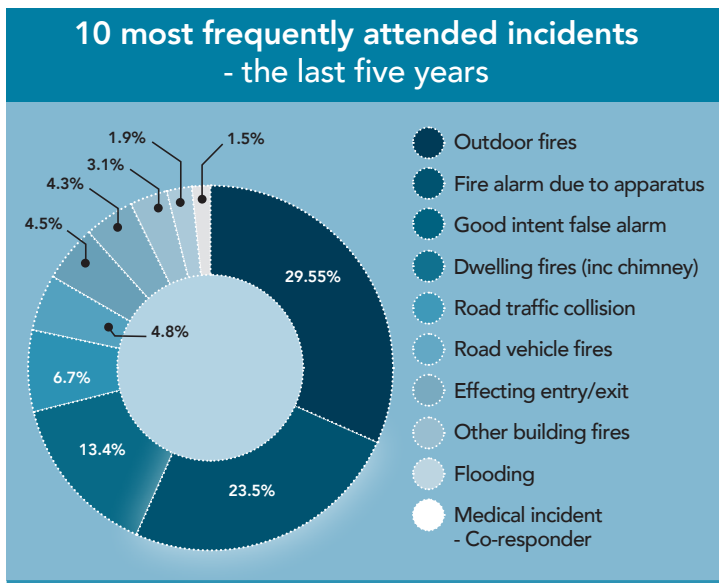
We know that over the last 10 years, working closely with our communities and key partners, we have reduced the

total number of incidents we attend by 21 percent. The total number of incidents we attended during 2020/21 is likely to have been impacted by the Covid 19 pandemic, however the total number attended is the lowest in the last 10 years, and 11 percent less than the previous year (2019/20).

To understand the risks faced by our communities, we need to know what type of incidents we attend. We know that we attend up to 30 different types

of incidents, however we also know that only 10 of these account for over 90 percent of all attendances. By focusing on these we will maximise our efforts to reduce risk and mitigate consequences.

The types of incidents we attend the most rarely change, which gives us confidence that we can target our resources effectively, implementing both short and long-term interventions. The charts below show the types of incidents we attend.



### Activity 2020/2021

|                                     |  |                              |                       |
|-------------------------------------|--|------------------------------|-----------------------|
| EMERGENCY CALLS<br><b>6,419</b>     | TOTAL INCIDENTS ATTENDED<br><b>2,991</b> | FALSE ALARMS<br><b>1,122</b> | FIRES<br><b>1,319</b> |
| SPECIAL SERVICE CALLS<br><b>550</b> | ROAD TRAFFIC COLLISIONS<br><b>128</b>    | RESCUES<br><b>224</b>        |                       |

“WE KNOW THAT OVER THE LAST 10 YEARS, WORKING CLOSELY WITH OUR COMMUNITIES AND KEY PARTNERS, WE HAVE REDUCED THE TOTAL NUMBER OF INCIDENTS WE ATTEND BY 21 PERCENT.”

Working in collaboration with **Operational Research in Health (ORH) Ltd** we have developed a fire and rescue risk profile for Northumberland. Applying analysis and statistical modelling, we have:

- Analysed incident and response data of all incident types attended by the service.
- Identified multiple data sources relating to fire and other risks, such as population and demographics, building and road network data.
- Applied random forest modelling to determine risk scores, and to identify which characteristics have the strongest relationship to the likelihood of incidents occurring. For instance, we know that there is a strong relationship between deliberate outdoor fires and crime deprivation (this is the recorded crime for four major crime types, violence, burglary, theft and criminal damage).
- Assessed these relationships to consider risk across Northumberland.

This process allows us to determine a risk score by Lower Layer Super Output Area (LSOA). A LSOA is a geographical area of approximately 1500 people or 650 households, and there are 197 in Northumberland. The risk score is relative to Northumberland, and to the highest risk LSOA.

Our profile helps us to determine where we target our resources to address risk, and what factors impact on both the likelihood of an incident happening, and the severity of any resulting consequence. This in turn influences our Prevention and Protection programmes, as well as ensuring we have our Community Risk and Response resources where we need them most.

Risk is dynamic, and we will continue to review risks to our communities, our people, our reputation and the delivery of our statutory responsibilities.



# DWELLING FIRES

During 2020/21 we attended 199 house fires in Northumberland, 90 percent of which were accidental.

These incidents can have a devastating affect on those involved, sometimes leading to injury and even death. Our risk profile uses multiple data sets to inform our programmes, and we enhance our profile with data

that allows us the opportunity to target our prevention towards those most likely to have an accidental fire in their home. Our partners help us with this by sharing, where appropriate, information and data on individuals and families who would benefit most from our support.

Where we can, we will work with our

partners collaboratively to develop our programmes and strengthen our reciprocal training and referral processes to ensure we can help and support the people who need us the most.

## What we do to reduce risk:

- ▶ Deliver a targeted safe and wellbeing programme, ensuring people remain at the heart of what we do.
- ▶ Work in collaboration with partners to develop our prevention policy.
- ▶ Deliver robust safeguarding referrals leading to positive outcomes for those at risk.
- ▶ Deliver training for Community Risk and Response personnel and assess operational and command competence.
- ▶ Undertake fire investigations to ensure learning.
- ▶ Undertake case reviews to inform learning.
- ▶ Continue to develop our use of social media platforms to share key messages with our communities.

## What we plan to do, to further reduce risk:

- ▶ Introduce additional measures to monitor the success of our safe and wellbeing programme, ensuring we are targeting those who are at high or very high risk of having a fire in their home.
- ▶ Introduce community safety training and qualifications for Community Safety and Community Risk and Response personnel.
- ▶ Work with partners to further share relevant data to assist risk profiling and targeting.
- ▶ Pilot the NFCC national model for dwelling fires as a 'proof of concept'.
- ▶ Launch a dedicated NFRS website.
- ▶ Develop and implement Community Fire Risk Management Information System (CFRMIS) online services to allow for online referrals.
- ▶ Implement robust quality assurance processes.
- ▶ Evaluate the success of our safe and wellbeing programme.



# AUTOMATIC FALSE ALARMS (AFA) IN DWELLINGS

These are incidents we attend where a smoke alarm has activated in the home, but there is no fire present.

Our risk profile tells us that factors influencing the likelihood of an AFA in the home are social deprivation, social residential buildings and the population who are over 65 years of age. As there is no fire, the risk of injury is low. However, we should consider these incidents as a warning that risks may be present.

With an ageing population, there is potential for numbers of this incident type to increase, potentially also leading to an increase in actual dwelling fires. Working with our partners, therefore, becomes more important than ever.

## What we do to reduce risk:

Two or more AFAs in dwellings result in a referral to our Community Safety Department, who will visit the home to carry out a risk assessment.

Ensure our risk modelling includes data on members of our community who are 65 years old or older.

Ensure our referral pathways are clear and implemented appropriately.

Provide information to signpost individuals and families to further help and support when they are not ready for a referral to be made.

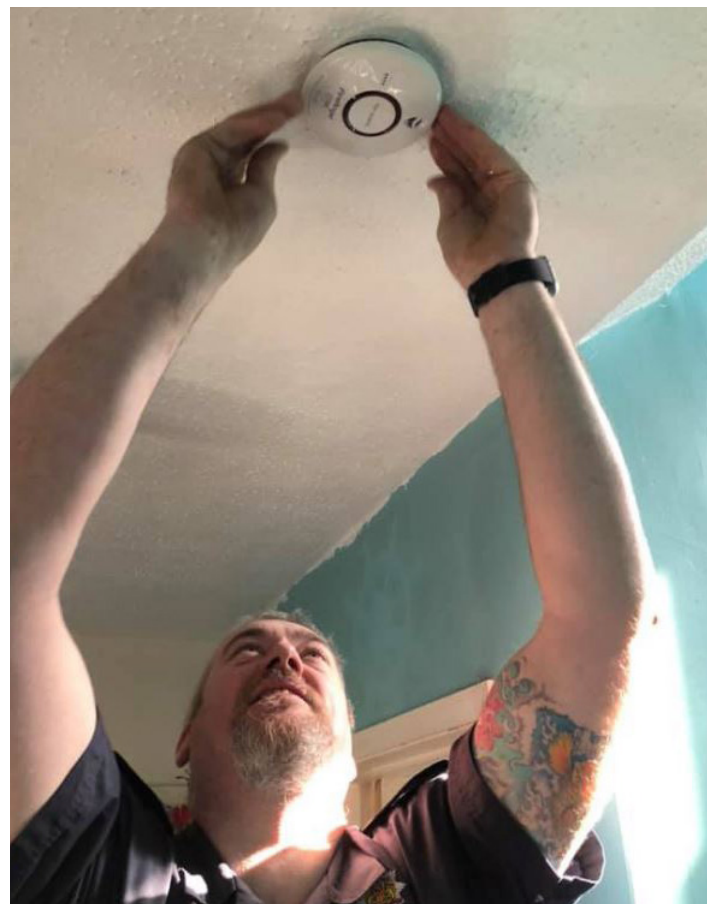
Deliver training for Community Risk and Response personnel and assess operational and command competence.

## What we plan to do, to further reduce risk:

Undertake additional analysis in order to better understand AFAs in dwellings.

Continually monitor and analyse AFA data to understand and target resources and advice, where underlying trends are identified.

Work with the NFCC to implement and support campaigns and initiatives.





## OUTDOOR FIRES

During 2020/21, over 29 percent of the incidents we attended were to outdoor fires. 75 percent of these were started deliberately, typically involving rubbish, grass and woodland.

Although we attend a lot of outdoor fires, the risk of injury remains low. However, there are significant financial

and environmental impacts associated with this type of incident.

Our incident profile tells us that outdoor fires typically occur in the South East of the County, and our risk profile suggests outdoor fires occur in our more deprived areas where there is a higher crime rate (there is a strong

correlation between outdoor firesetting and anti-social behaviour).

There is also a strong relationship between outdoor firesetting, anti-social behaviour and young people under the age of 17.

### What we do to reduce risk:

- ▶ Monitor performance through our Performance and Assurance Framework.
- ▶ Collaborate with our neighbouring North East FRSs to support research into the culture of deliberate outdoor firesetting.
- ▶ Deliver our 'Extinguish' Programme for young people involved in firesetting.
- ▶ Deliver our schools education programme in the areas where outdoor fires are most likely to happen.
- ▶ Engage children and young people in rapid local interventions.
- ▶ Work in partnership to enhance arson reduction.

### What we plan to do, to further reduce risk:

- ▶ Collaborate with our neighbouring North East FRSs to support research into the consistency of reporting and recording of deliberate fires.
- ▶ Collaborate with key partners on the development of target area profiles.
- ▶ Further develop our key partnerships in order to strengthen core programme delivery.
- ▶ Develop robust quality assurance processes.
- ▶ Evaluate the impact of our proactive prevention programmes.
- ▶ Evaluate our reactive interventions.

# WILDFIRES

Extended periods of warm, dry weather can help support the development of large vegetation fires – fires which we call wildfires. While wildfires tend to be more common in the spring and summer, they can occur at any time of the year.

The number of wildfires occurring in Northumberland is relatively low (17 incidents between 2016/17 and 2020/21), however they can

escalate quickly and spread across large areas. Wildfires can cause major disruption to life, property and infrastructure and have catastrophic consequences for the environment, flora and fauna. 70 percent of wildfires in Northumberland have been accidental and have burned for periods of between a few hours, up to one month.

The Met Office climate projections

for the UK indicate significant temperature rises in the decades ahead for both winter and summer. Extreme weather could become more frequent and intense.

We have measures in place to monitor both climate change and wildfire risk in order to ensure we have the correct resources where and when we need them most.

The following definition has been used for a wildfire; a fire  $\geq$  1hectare (10,000 sqm) and/or  $\geq$  4 fire engines or vehicles and/or  $\geq$  6 hours duration and/or flame length  $\geq$  1.5 m and/or serious risk to life, environment, property or infrastructure.

## What we do to reduce risk:

Work closely with the Met Office and Natural Hazards Partnership so that we obtain early warning that wildfire risk is elevated/severe/extreme. We also monitor the Daily Hazard Assessment.

Monitor the Met Office Fire Severity Index (FSI).

Provide wildfire prevention and preparedness advice to residents, businesses and visitors in line with our Wildfire Communication Plan.

Create and review detailed fire plans for sites that are considered at highest risk of wildfires.

Utilise a wildfire scoresheet in partnership with Northumberland National Park Authority and Natural England, subsequently published by the Uplands Management Group.

Chair the NFCC Wildfire Group sharing good practice for wildfire prevention, preparedness and response around the UK.

Facilitate the multiagency Northumberland Fire Group. [www.northumberland.gov.uk/Fire/Group.aspx](http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/Fire/Group.aspx)

Provide Specialist Personal Protective Equipment for all Community Risk and Response personnel.

Maintain four specialist wildfire hub stations.

Train Wildfire Support Officers to support locally.

Train and provide National Wildfire Tactical Advisors.

Work in Partnership to support the sharing of assets.

Support Northumberland County Council Climate Change Action Plan 2021-23.

## What we plan to do, to further reduce risk:

Design and implement an annual wildfire exercise to test the response to wildfire incidents, which will aim to include partner agencies and neighbouring Fire & Rescue Services.

Use the wildfire risk scoresheets developed with our partners to obtain a more detailed and localised understanding of wildfire risk across Northumberland.

Work with colleagues at Northumberland County Council to help develop plans for planting the Great Northumberland Forest.



# NON-RESIDENTIAL FIRES (OR OTHER BUILDING FIRES)

These are fires in commercial buildings, such as the retail sector, industrial, manufacturing, hospital and educational facilities.

These incident types account for four percent of all incidents attended, and we attended 93 of these in 2020/21.

Risk from injury is relatively low, however the impact of non-residential fires on the economy can be significant.

Our risk profile has indicated that, in addition to the implementation of a risk-based inspection programme, protection work should prioritise retail buildings and areas with high deprivation.

## What we do to reduce risk:

- ▶ Continue to support the business community in legislative responsibilities.
- ▶ Deliver a risk-based inspection programme.
- ▶ Provide information, advice and guidance to businesses, enforcing legislation when necessary.
- ▶ Engage with businesses, introducing innovative methods of delivery.
- ▶ Increase the inspection capability of Fire Safety by introducing Level 3 Inspectors into Community Risk and Response and establishing Associate Inspectors.
- ▶ Work with regional fire and rescue services to collaborate on Business Fire Safety.
- ▶ Implement actions identified following national incidents such as the Grenfell Tower tragedy.
- ▶ Implement a Site Specific Risk Information policy to ensure Community Risk and Response personnel are aware of the risks relevant to each high-risk commercial building.

## What we plan to do, to further reduce risk:

- ▶ Expand the Community Risk and Response Fire Safety Level 3 qualification to all operational Watch and Crew Managers.
- ▶ Educate and advise businesses on the completion of Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPS).
- ▶ Consider the fire safety implications of the new Building Safety Bill, and implement recommendations as appropriate.
- ▶ Target all commercial premises involved in a fire for a post fire safety inspection.
- ▶ Ensure that all inspecting officers who hold a Fire Safety Level 4 diploma qualification are aligned to the 3rd party accreditation process identified by the NFCC.
- ▶ Develop an on-line self-assessment process for businesses to register their fire safety compliance.
- ▶ Monitor a series of identified targeted measures to inform and enhance fire safety delivery across the commercial sector.
- ▶ Develop a communications strategy to utilise social media platforms to inform and advise businesses.
- ▶ Identify emerging significant risks in the built environment and assess the impact of these on our service provision and the risks they present to our communities from initial awareness through planning, construction, occupation and its ongoing use.
- ▶ Further develop the use of our associate fire safety inspecting team to carry out fire safety audits in support of our risk-based inspection program.
- ▶ Continue to develop our action plan on petroleum.





# AUTOMATIC FALSE ALARMS (AFA) IN NON-RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS

These are incidents we attend where the automatic fire detection equipment or alarm system has activated and there is no fire.

As there is no fire, the risk of injury is low, however as 34 percent of all incidents we attend are to false alarms, there is a significant impact on fire

and rescue resource which could be available for other incidents where risk of injury or even fatality is greater.

## What we do to reduce risk:

- ▶ Work with businesses to provide advice and guidance on the management and maintenance of automatic alarm systems.
- ▶ Manage a cost recovery process to encourage better management and maintenance of automatic alarm systems.

## What we plan to do, to further reduce risk:

- ▶ Target businesses who are identified as having frequent AFA calls to their premises and work with them to reduce impact on NFRS.
- ▶ Continually monitor and analyse AFA data to understand and target resources and advice to business, where underlying trends are identified.
- ▶ Work with NFCC to implement and support campaigns and initiatives.

# ROAD VEHICLE FIRES

During 2020/21 we attended 143 vehicle fires, and many of these had been started deliberately. Perhaps not surprisingly, our risk profile tells us road vehicle fires are more likely to occur in our more deprived areas where there is a higher crime rate.

## What we do to reduce risk:

- ▶ Maintain robust partnership with Northumbria Police to inform our understanding of why these incidents are happening in Northumberland.
- ▶ Share information and intelligence with partners where appropriate.
- ▶ Attend regular partnership meetings such as Victim Offender Location (VOL) meetings to share intelligence, improve learning and effectively target prevention resources.
- ▶ Maintain Fire Investigation qualifications and competence.
- ▶ Develop robust regional and national partnerships to share good practice.

## What we plan to do, to further reduce risk:

- ▶ Continue to strengthen our relationship with Northumbria Police and other partners to ensure the effective sharing of information and intelligence.
- ▶ Further develop the role of Community Risk and Response Station Managers with key partners, and with the wider community.
- ▶ Increase Fire Investigation knowledge, experience and capacity within NFRS.



## ROAD TRAFFIC COLLISIONS

Each year people die or suffer serious injuries on the roads of Northumberland. We typically attend only the most serious collisions and attended 128 during 2020/21. Our

profiling tells us that 78 percent of all road traffic collisions involved at least one driver who lives in Northumberland. The North East Road Safety Resource provides us

with additional road traffic collision data, helping us to understand how we compare with both England and other local authorities across the region.

### What we do to reduce risk:

- ▶ Maintain membership of the Northumberland Road Safety Coordination Group (NRSCG).
- ▶ Contribute to the Northumberland Road Safety Strategy and Action Plan.
- ▶ Monitor road safety performance utilising analysis provided by the North East Road Safety Resource.
- ▶ Deliver a road safety programme in schools as directed by our risk profile.
- ▶ Deliver key road safety messages on all prevention programmes with young people.
- ▶ Use social media platforms to share key messages.
- ▶ Maintain a Community Risk and Response capability across Northumberland.
- ▶ Train firefighters in the latest trauma management techniques in collaboration with North East Ambulance Service to ensure a high quality of casualty management.
- ▶ Provide all front-line fire engines with specialist training and equipment to deal with road traffic collisions and potential casualties quickly and efficiently.

### What we plan to do, to further reduce risk:

- ▶ Identify a road safety lead.
- ▶ Work in collaboration with Northumberland Road Safety Co-ordination group to monitor and identify emerging road safety issues affecting the residents of Northumberland.
- ▶ Provide road safety education in the community-based upon identified risks specific to geographical areas.
- ▶ Provide road safety education in schools based on identified risks and targeted at relevant age groups.
- ▶ Further develop and enhance public 'Biker Down' sessions to inform and educate motorcyclists on the dangers of, and actions to be taken following motorcycle collisions.
- ▶ Continue to engage with the wider fire and rescue service sector to stay informed of any updates and changes to ensure that we take advantage of the latest available technology and procedures where appropriate.

# FLOODING AND WATER RESCUE

We attended 276 flooding incidents between 2016/17 and 2020/21. These incidents can devastate parts of the community and leave an impact that can last for years.

While numbers have remained constant, we attended a number of incidents in August of 2019/20, and these were the result of heavy rainfall. The Met Office claims that as the world warms, fewer rainy days in summer are

expected. Winter rains could remain as likely as they are now. In 2008, widespread flooding in Northumberland affected 1,200 properties.

In 2012, flooding events impacted 240 properties. Smaller, more isolated flooding events occurred in 2013 and 2014. We have measures in place to monitor flooding risk in order to ensure we have the correct resources where and when we need them most.

We also respond to water rescue incidents, not related to flooding. Although numbers are small, 48 were recorded between 2016/17 and 2020/21, the number of incidents of this type has been increasing. Almost 44 percent of those rescued from water were from moving water such as rivers or the sea. Such events can be devastating for those involved.

## What we do to reduce risk:

- ▶ Implement a schools education programme, delivering key messages on water safety.
- ▶ Utilise social media platforms to share water safety messages and both national and local campaigns.
- ▶ Maintain Swift Water Rescue capability at strategic locations across Northumberland.
- ▶ Work with partners during the response and recovery phase of flooding events.
- ▶ Undertake local and multi-agency planning, training and exercises.
- ▶ Work with NCC partners to develop and implement the Northumberland Local Risk Management Strategy.
- ▶ Work with partners to develop multi-agency flood plans.
- ▶ Support NCC Climate Change Action Plan 2021-23.

## What we plan to do, to further reduce risk:

- ▶ Expand our Swift Water Rescue Capability by upskilling additional personnel at key locations across the county.
- ▶ Identify areas of risk and address with prevention measures as appropriate.
- ▶ Continue to train our personnel in the latest techniques and procedures to ensure maximum effectiveness at water rescue incidents.



# NATIONAL RESILIENCE

The term resilience refers to the ability to withstand a crisis and recover from it quickly. This could include events impacting on national security, wide scale flooding or wildfires, or pandemics such as Covid 19.

The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England (2018) confirms that the Government has responsibility

for fire and rescue related national resilience assets and capabilities but that these should be managed through local fire and rescue services.

A national programme called New Dimensions, identified the need for 47 High Volume Pumps (HVP) across the country to support water or flood related incidents. We host one of these

HVPs in Northumberland, situated in the southeast of the county but ready to deploy across the county and indeed the country when required. These incidents are low in likelihood, but the impact is significant, with the possibility of building collapse, large scale environmental damage and the evacuation or rescue of people.

## What we do to reduce risk:

- ▶ Complete and regularly review risk assessments for Northumberland.
- ▶ Deliver a programme of site visits.
- ▶ Participate in national exercises.
- ▶ Ensure continuous improvement by implementing actions to address recommendations identified following site visits or national exercises.
- ▶ Maintain HPV capability and competence.

## What we plan to do, to further reduce risk:

- ▶ Observe and evaluate operational incidents and exercises, implementing recommendation identified.
- ▶ Review systems, processes and procedures.
- ▶ Provide support to HPV operators, instructors and Tactical Advisors with competence standards, continuous professional development, and acquisition training.
- ▶ Maintain an effective governance process for the HPV capability.

# EFFECTING ENTRY/EXIT

Sometimes we are asked to help Northumbria Police or North East Ambulance Service to gain access to someone's home. This may be because they need urgent medical help or because someone is trapped in a room and can't get out.

We will only do this where we consider there to be a risk

to life, and we will gain entry in the least destructive way possible.

Over the last few years, these types of incidents have been increasing, and we attended 135 incidents of this type in 2020/21. Due to the nature of this incident type the risk of injury and even death is high.

## What we do to reduce risk:

- ▶ Maintain Community Risk and Response competence.
- ▶ Ensure lock pulling kits are available on all fire engines.
- ▶ Continue to provide training and instruction to operational personnel in methods of entry.

## What we plan to do, to further reduce risk:

- ▶ Work in partnership with Northumbria Police, North East Ambulance Service and regional FRS', to frequently review current arrangements to inform how we all can continue to provide an appropriate response to these incidents in the future.
- ▶ Research and review further equipment that may provide alternative methods of entry where appropriate.

## MEDICAL INCIDENT – CO-RESPONDER

Between January 2016 and September 2017, we responded to 293 medical incidents.

This was a programme delivered in collaboration with North East Ambulance Service (NEAS), involving our firefighters attending high priority calls including patients who were unconscious and/or not breathing. Due to the nature of this

incident type, the risk of injury and death is high, with 634 casualties and 60 fatalities per 1,000 incidents.

Although this pilot programme has concluded, we will continue to review the possible benefits of delivering this programme in the future.

## MARAUDING TERRORIST ATTACKS (MTA)

Marauding Terrorist Attacks (MTAs) are fast-moving, violent attacks where assailants move through a location aiming to find and kill or hurt as many people as possible.

The likelihood of this type of incident occurring in Northumberland is low, however there is significant risk of injury or death should an incident like this happen. It is important that

we have robust planning in place, and that we work closely with other emergency services so that a response is coordinated at every level.

The foundation to every multi-agency response is the Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles (JESIP), however we may need to take other factors into consideration when responding to attacks.

The JESIP Joint Operating Principles (JOPs) for terrorist attacks have been developed from operational experience from the three emergency services, as well as learning taken from actual attacks and exercises.

The overwhelming priority will always be to respond quickly and proactively to protect the public.

### What we do to reduce risk:

All appropriate operational staff have received training regarding the Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles (JESIP), aligned to the JESIP Joint Doctrine document.

All appropriate operational staff have been provided with associated JESIP aide memoires to assist commanders and responders in dealing with critical multi-agency incidents.

To support multi-agency operations at terrorist related, or other critical incidents, NFRS has trained a number of officers known as National Inter-Agency Liaison Officers (NILOs). These NILOs have appropriate knowledge, skills and security clearance to be able to respond to these types of incidents effectively. Further, these NILOs proactively engage with local, regional and national networks to ensure that information is appropriately exchanged between our multi-agency partners and stakeholders.

All appropriate operational staff have received training regarding the JESIP JOPs for terrorist type attacks - including an active exercise programme to apply and test this specific learning.

NFRS has a number of terrorist attack response planning documents to ensure that the Service is prepared for these types of incidents.

### What we plan to do, to further reduce risk:

NFRS will continue to provide appropriate JESIP refresher training (including specific refresher training regarding terror attacks), alongside our multi-agency partners and stakeholders.

NFRS will continue to engage in our active exercise programme alongside our multi-agency partners and stakeholders, thus ensuring that the learning provided is being periodically applied and tested in a realistic manner. Any learning from these exercises will be fed back into the Service and the wider sector, ensuring continuous improvement for both the Service and our partners.

NFRS will continuously keep all of our terrorist attack pre-plans under close critical review, amending them as appropriate - with subsequent testing of these amended plans via our active exercise programme.



# EMERGING RISKS

In addition to the range of incidents outlined in our CRMP, we must be prepared to respond to incidents that are currently infrequent yet have the potential for high impact to our communities, and continue to monitor any potential increase in the risk of likelihood and/or impact.

## CLIMATE CHANGE AND EXTREME WEATHER

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) provides assessments on climate change, implications and future risks. Climate change is bringing increased temperatures, but this is leading to multiple changes such as heatwaves, heavy rainfall and extreme weather events such as storms. These changes increase the likelihood of incidents such as flooding and wildfires, but they also increase the likelihood that the Service will be required to respond to potentially devastating events, as we saw with Storm Arwen and Barra, and to support our communities in the recovery from such extreme occurrences.

We will continue to debrief and review every response to extreme weather events to ensure we have the necessary policies, procedures, training and equipment available to provide an effective and resilient operating model. NFRS supports NCC in its delivery of the Climate Change Action Plan 2020-23. In recent years the council has reduced its carbon emissions by a third and the county is now ranked as one of the greenest in the country. However, there is still work to be done in both further reducing our own greenhouse gas emissions and providing leadership to encourage residents, businesses and other organisations to take action to cut their own carbon footprint with the aim of reaching a net-zero Northumberland by 2030. As we support the delivery of the action plan, we recognise that the positive impacts on health and



climate may take many years. As such, NFRS must continue to monitor climate change and continuously assess our resilience in responding to this increasing risk ensuring we continue to have the right people, in the right place, with the right skills.

## PANDEMIC

A pandemic is an outbreak of infectious disease, occurring over a wide geographical area, and generally affecting a significant proportion of the world's population, usually over the course of several months. In December 2019, the World Health Organisation learned of a new coronavirus called SARS-CoV-2, now known as Covid-19. NFRS works

closely with our colleagues in NCC Business Resilience and Emergency Planning and Public Health, and with partners in Northumbria LRF and nationally through the NFCC to ensure risks are captured in our CRR, and to ensure our business continuity arrangements are robust. The Service reacted quickly to the worsening pandemic to revise our operating model and service delivery to ensure that the people of Northumberland were protected.

On 22 January 2021, following a Covid-19 thematic inspection, a report was published by HMICFRS on how well the Service had responded to the current pandemic. Pleasingly, inspectors found that the Service

had adapted and responded to the pandemic effectively. Implementing several measures to protect personnel and managing arrangements through our Business Interruption Management Team (BIMT) our fire control and community fire stations remained available as normal. In addition, the Service was able to provide fire prevention advice to the most vulnerable members of our community by adapting our approach and introducing a triage process. At the time of publishing this CRMP, the county is still in the midst of the pandemic and the Service continues to adapt and develop

will outnumber children younger than 5 years. In 2050, 80 percent of older people will be living in low and middle-income countries, and the pace of population ageing is much faster than in the past. This shift in demographics can be seen in Northumberland, with the number of those aged 85 and over forecast to increase by 102 percent by 2043. As people age, they are more likely to experience several health conditions at the same time. Older age is also characterised by the emergence of several complex health states, often the consequence of multiple underlying factors including frailty, falls and delirium.

An increase in age and associated health conditions, may also result in an increase in risk from fire. As such, we will continuously review our risk model to ensure we are aware any additional factors that may influence risks to our communities; whilst continuing to strengthen our partnership arrangements in order to effectively deliver our prevention programmes to those who require our services the most.

**FUTURE HOUSING AND COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) defines a local plan as: 'The plan for the future development of the local area, drawn up by the local planning authority in consultation with the community'.

NCC consulted on modifications to its Local Plan during 2021 and NFRS continues to work closely with our partners across the council to ensure we are aware of and can plan for, emerging risk in relation to future residential, commercial and industrial developments.

We have strengthened our process of identifying emerging risks, enabling us to consider all impacts to our communities and our service.



its offering to the communities of Northumberland to maintain its high standards of delivery whilst ensuring it continues to protect the people of Northumberland and staff.

**AGEING POPULATION AND INCREASED VULNERABILITY**

According to the World Health Organisation, between 2015 and 2050 the proportion of the world's population over 60 years will nearly double from 12 percent to 22 percent. By 2020, the number of people aged 60 years and older





We have provided detail on two such emerging risks below:

### BRITISHVOLT

Britishvolt is building the first Gigaplant in the UK, at a site in Northumberland, where it will build sustainable low carbon battery cells. At full capacity in 2027, the Gigaplant will produce cells for around 300,000 electric vehicle battery packs per year.

NFRS started consulting and engaging with partners at a very early stage, with the first virtual online meeting taking place in January 2021. Since that time, we have engaged in regular virtual and on-site meetings with significant stakeholders.

The Gigaplant is proposed to provide 3,000 jobs for the North East, many from the local area. Further jobs are expected to be created in the supply chain. NFRS will continue to monitor the potential increase in associated risk.

As the site will come under the Control of Major Accident Hazards (COMAH) regulations we have discussed with Britishvolt what materials will be used and stored on site during the manufacturing process to gain a greater understanding of the hazards this will pose to our Community Risk and Response crews. However, work in the early stages by the Health and Safety Executive and the Environment Agency has ensured compliance with COMAH regulations.

Our Community Risk and Response firefighters have made site visits to familiarise themselves with the site

during the construction phase. Once construction of phase 1 has been completed, firefighters will carry out a site inspection, completing a site-specific risk information (SSRI) document to record potential risks. This information will be added to our mobile data terminals (MDT), ensuring firefighters attending an incident have all the risk information they need.

We will consider specialist firefighting requirements and pre-determined attendances (PDA) based on the hazard information provided by Britishvolt.

### NORTHUMBERLAND TRAIN LINE

NFRS continue to work with partners throughout the development of the Northumberland Train Line (Ashington to Blyth rail link), which will connect the South East of the county to central Newcastle. The reopening of the Northumberland Line will deliver 18 miles of upgraded track and six new stations, five located in Northumberland at Ashington, Bedlington Station, Bebside, South Newsham and Seaton Delaval. The scheme is planned to be completed by winter 2023 and is intended to:

- Improve access from towns such as Ashington and Blyth to employment hubs like Newcastle, as well as opening up new opportunities for education and travel.
- Provide a real incentive for potential employers to relocate to and invest in the area.

- Provide vital infrastructure to help deliver the region’s aspirations for population and economic growth. Help to attract visitors and improve local tourism. Enhance public transport connectivity within and beyond the region.
- Help to reduce congestion and improve air quality on key corridors by moving people away from car travel and onto public transport.
- Support the delivery of significant growth in sectors such as renewable energy, offshore oil and gas and engineering.
- NFRS have advised and assisted the planning team on fire precautions required at the proposed sites and are reviewing Community Risk and Response requirements to ensure an appropriate emergency response is provided. Our fire safety inspectors will continue to work with partners to identify new and developing businesses to ensure compliance with fire safety regulations, and responsibilities under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.





# AIMS AND PRIORITIES

NCC has a vision of **'one council that works for everyone'** underpinned by the five key principles of:

- ▶ **Living** – we want you to feel safe, healthy and cared for.
- ▶ **Enjoying** – we want you to love where you live.
- ▶ **Connecting** – we want you to love having access to things.
- ▶ **Learning** – we want you to achieve and realise your potential.
- ▶ **Thriving** – we want to attract more and better jobs.

To support NCC vision and principles, and to deliver our mission statement of **'Making Northumberland Safer'** NFRS has developed the following aims to:

- ▶ Reduce the number of fires, road traffic collisions and other emergencies in the community.
- ▶ Reduce the number of deaths and injuries and mitigate the commercial, economic and social cost of emergency incidents.
- ▶ Safeguard the environment and heritage sites (both built and natural).
- ▶ Support communities to protect themselves from harm.
- ▶ Provide money through the provision of a lean, efficient and resilient service.

Working towards our vision, NFRS has identified the following priorities for 2022-23

## 01 Deliver service improvements as outlined in our Continuous Improvement Plan.

The service has a comprehensive Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP) detailing a suite of actions against HMICFRS Areas for Improvement, CRMP priorities, and Priority programmes and projects. The Strategic Performance Board will monitor progress as part of the Service's Performance and Assurance Framework.

## 02 Deliver the NFCC risk model for dwelling fires as a pilot in Northumberland.

The NFCC in collaboration with Operational Research in Health has developed an evidence-based methodology for dwelling fires. We will enhance the risk model for use locally and implement a pilot in Northumberland to help us target our safe and wellbeing programme effectively and efficiently.

## 03 Undertake a review of protection delivery across the organisation utilising the NFCC Fire Standard and Implementation Tool.

The review, and subsequent implementation of recommendations, will ensure we are a fire and rescue service that improves the safety and wellbeing of our communities by reducing risks and incidents in the built environment, as outlined in the fire standard. Protection activities will educate and regulate those responsible for keeping buildings safe.

## 04 Undertake a review of prevention delivery across the organisation utilising the NFCC Fire Standard and Implementation Tool.

The review, and subsequent implementation of recommendations, will ensure we are a fire and rescue service that works to educate our communities to adopt safer behaviours, improving their safety, health and wellbeing, as outlined in the fire standard. Prevention activities will be effective, efficient and targeted.

## 05 Apply robust risk modelling to inform and further develop our community risk and response operating model.

We will work in collaboration with Operational Research in Health to produce an analysis of Community Risk and Response provision across Northumberland.

This will allow the service to assess the optimum distribution of our stations, fleet, equipment and specialist response to meet our risks, and will be used to inform our strategy for future estate and operational resource procurement, provision, and resilience.

## 06 Undertake a review of response standards for Northumberland.

We will review our response to emergency incidents across Northumberland, ensuring we continue to provide an effective and efficient service to our communities.



## INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL ASSURANCE

Good performance management and assurance will ensure our service is effective and efficient.

### Internal:

- ◆ We monitor and assure our performance through a Performance and Assurance Framework.
- ◆ Our Strategic Performance Board provides high level oversight of all of our performance and assurance arrangements across the service.
- ◆ Priorities and Service Improvements are monitored through a Continuous Improvement Plan to ensure we are a service that is continually improving.
- ◆ We review risk annually to inform our CRMP, refreshing priorities and service delivery strategies.
- ◆ Our annual Statement of Assurance continues to provide confidence that we are delivering on our statutory responsibilities.
- ◆ NCC undertakes service reviews with the aim of improving efficiency and effectiveness, ensuring continuous improvement.

### External:

- ◆ HMICFRS will provide external assurance to the communities of Northumberland, through the delivery of regular programmes of inspections, additional thematic inspections, and robust monitoring arrangements.
- ◆ We will use learning from National Operational Learning and Joint Organisational Learning to ensure continued improvement of our service delivery.
- ◆ Our Training, Assurance and Safety Department has achieved the Skills for Justice Quality Mark, ensuring robust external assurance of training delivery.
- ◆ Our Community Safety Department is Matrix Accredited ensuring good quality delivery of information, advice and guidance to our communities.
- ◆ Our Prince's Trust programme is both internally and externally verified.

# YOUR VIEWS

The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England (2018) reminds us that we are accountable to the communities we serve, and that we must consult regularly on our risk management plan.

In our plan, we have told you about the types of risks communities face in Northumberland and set out the things we are doing and plan to do to remove or to mitigate those risks. Thank you for taking the time to read our plan, we would now love to hear your views.

We would like to ask you four questions which you can answer by completing our survey online:

[www.haveyoursay.northumberland.gov.uk/nfrs/crpmconsultation2022/](http://www.haveyoursay.northumberland.gov.uk/nfrs/crpmconsultation2022/)

This consultation opens on **Wednesday 5th January 2022** and will close on **Wednesday 16th February 2022**.

An Easy Read copy of our plan can also be found on our website at [www.northumberland.gov.uk/fire](http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/fire).

This can also be provided in hard copy. If you would like to receive an Easy Read copy please email us at [fireconsult@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:fireconsult@northumberland.gov.uk)

## QUESTION 01

In our Community Risk Management Plan, we have explained that there are 10 types of incidents that account for over 90 percent of all the incidents that we attend. Do you agree that we should focus our prevention, protection and community risk and response resources on these incidents?

YES  NO

If NO, please explain why here:

.....

.....

.....

## QUESTION 02

Against each incident type, we have explained what we do, and also what we plan to do to address the risks we have identified. Are there any other activities you feel we could consider?

YES  NO

If YES, please provide details of the activities you would like us to consider:

.....

.....

.....

### QUESTION 03

Are there any fire and rescue related risks you feel we have not identified, and that we should consider as a priority for our prevention, protection and community risk and response resources?

YES  NO

If YES, please detail the risks and how you feel we should use our resource to address them:

.....

.....

.....

### QUESTION 04

We will monitor progress against the priorities described in our plan in our Continuous Improvement Plan. Would you like us to tell you how we are doing?

YES  NO

If YES, please let us know how you would like us to provide you with an update:

.....

.....

.....

### QUESTION 05

If you have anything else you would like to tell us, please include it in the box below.

Additional comments:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....



 **Northumberland**  
County Council

**Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service**

West Hartford Business Park  
Cramlington NE23 3JP

**Tel** 01670 621111

[www.northumberland.gov.uk/fire](http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/fire)

  @NlandFRS

This page is intentionally left blank



## Northumberland County Council

COMMITTEE: CABINET

DATE: 25<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2022

---

**TITLE OF REPORT:** Update on Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) Round 2 Inspection report into Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS)

**Report of Chief Fire Officer:** Paul Hedley

**Cabinet Member:** Cllr Colin Horncastle Portfolio Holder for Community Services and Fire Authority Chair

---

### **Purpose of report**

The purpose of the report is to update Cabinet on the findings of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) following the publication of the second inspection report into Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service on December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021. This report covered the period of inspection and assessment from 14<sup>th</sup> June – 5<sup>th</sup> August 2021.

A previous briefing report was provided to Cabinet in October 2021, after the pre-publication draft HMICFRS report had been received by NFRS on 27<sup>th</sup> September 2021.

### **Recommendations**

Cabinet is asked to:

- Note the content of the report
- Invite further reports and/or presentations as necessary to provide assurance on the progress being made against the findings of the report and areas for improvement

### **Link to Corporate Plan**

The principal areas of relevance this report has to the priorities within the NCC Corporate Plan 2018-2021 are;

- "We want to be efficient, open and work for everyone" (**How**)
- "We want you to feel safe, healthy and cared for" (**Living**)
- "We want you to achieve and realise your potential" (**Learning**)
- "We want to make a difference" (**Successes measures**)

## 1.0 Synopsis

1.1 HMICFRS published the second report into Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service's effectiveness, efficiency, and people on 15<sup>th</sup> December 2021. NFRS received an embargoed pre-publication copy of the final report on 14<sup>th</sup> December along with the HMICFRS feedback from the factual accuracy check which was submitted by NFRS on 8<sup>th</sup> October.

1.2 The factual accuracy check submitted to HMICFRS on the 8<sup>th</sup> October contained 29 areas of response which broadly covered areas linked to;

- The extension of the 2017-21 Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP)
- Risk Profiling
- Grenfell response plans
- Working with partners
- NFRS People Strategy, and,
- The Cause for Concern

1.3 Of the 29 areas of response submitted by NFRS,

- 10 were Accepted
- 11 were Partially Accepted, and,
- 8 were Not Accepted.

Disappointingly, the challenges made in relation to the extension of the IRMP, risk profiling and the cause for concern were rejected.

1.4 The overall findings of the second HMICFRS inspection are that NFRS continues to **Require Improvement** against the three-inspection pillar gradings of Effectiveness, Efficiency and People.

1.5 The 2021 Report contained 25 Areas for Improvement.



## 2.0 Comparison to 2019 Report

2.1 Following a thorough review and assessment of the pre-publication report by the NFRS Service Leadership Team (SLT) and the HMICFRS Service Liaison Officer, it was the service's view that although the draft pillar gradings currently remain the same, this was a significantly more positive and balanced report than that received in 2019.

### Positive Headlines from the Report Pillar Summaries

- *NFRS has improved its effectiveness*
  - *It has made progress against most of the AFIs from 2019*
  - *We saw improvements in the way it protects the public*
  - *We saw good use of data to create risk profiles*
  - *We found NFRS to be moving in a positive direction*
  - *[NFRSs} Financial management is generally good.*
  - *NFRS has made good use of reserves*
  - *We saw improved resourcing of service's prevention, protection and response functions.*
  - *The service collaborates with the county council and other fire and rescue services*
  - *We are pleased with how well NFRS manages its fleet and estates*
  - *We were pleased that the service has made changes to improve its culture*
  - *The service has got better at ensuring it has the right people with the right skills*
  - *The service is moving in the right direction to improve how it looks after its people*
- 2.2 HMI Andy Cooke stated in his introductory summary to the 2021 report that, *"The service has made significant improvements since our last inspection in 2019"*, and the HMI Northern Area Chief of Staff also stated during a Teams call to CFO Hedley, *"for the avoidance of doubt, it is very clear that NFRS is an improving service"*.
- 2.3 With regard to the 11 diagnostic areas of inspection., NFRS retained the GOOD assessment for 'Responding to major and multi-agency incidents' and moved from a 2019 position of Requires Improvement to GOOD on the 'Protecting the public through fire regulation'. All other diagnostics remain Requires Improvement
- 2.4 A comparator between the Effectiveness, Efficiency and People chapter summaries is attached as Appendix A

### 3.0 Cause for Concern

- 3.1 Following the 2021 inspection, NFRS was in receipt of one Cause of Concern (CoC) letter from HMICFRS regarding rest periods for staff operating a dual on-call / wholetime contract. NFRS already have a policy on managing dual contract working, which is low frequency and considered to be low risk, but the HMICFRS inspection identified that the process for monitoring and recording dual contract working was not as effective nor robust as required.
- 3.2 The CoC was referenced as a priority issue for NFRS to address within the Rd2 report, with NFRS required to have a plan to address the CoC formulated by 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021 and a solution introduced by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022.
- 3.3 Although NFRS challenged the issuing of the CoC, whilst awaiting formal confirmation of whether the challenge would be successful simultaneous activity was undertaken to introduce robust and resilient means for tracking dual contract staff activity to ensure that their health, safety, and welfare was more effectively managed. Importantly, there was also a major change of emphasis from individual responsibility to highlight times when personnel may feel fatigued to a system which placed that personal responsibility safeguard at the end of a hierarchy of actions.
- 3.4 After a review of evidence, NFRS determined not to solve the CoC issue via a blanket ban on dual contract availability prior to day shifts as this would have reduced operational availability significantly;
- a. 19 occasions when fire appliances unavailable to respond to an incident
  - b. 25 occasions when the station 4x4 vehicle would have been unavailable to support the appliance mobilisation
  - c. 15 occasions when an appliance would have been reduced to a crew of 3 staffing resulting in the appliance only being available to mobilise to low-risk incident types or proceed as a supplementary crew make up.

The loss / reduction of appliance and support vehicle availability equates to **30% of the on-call incident mobilisations** between 23.00 and 07.59 for the 12-month reference period.

- 3.5 Between 00.00 and 07.00 from 1<sup>st</sup> June 2020 – 31<sup>st</sup> May 2021 it was identified that there were only **15 occasions** when staff would have attended for on an operational duty shift after an on-call mobilisation.
- 3.6 NFRS has therefore introduced the following safeguarding measures to address the CoC;
- Fire Control now monitor all on-call mobilisations to determine whether a dual contract member is on the crew. If they are the staffing rotas are checked to see if the individual is due onto a 08.00 or 18.00 wholetime duty shift.

- A visual prompt is displayed for on-call mobilisations on the Fire Control operators' display screen.
- Any dual contract member of staff who is at an incident for more than 1 hour and is due on call in the wholetime roll is identified and told not to report for duty. They are given a delayed start time to ensure suitable periods of rest are provided. The NFRS Duty Manager and the individuals Line manager are notified.
- Full details of the incident, individuals and mitigations are now recorded within Fire Control.
- A Dual Contract Task-card has been designed and issued to all Flexi Duty Officers (FDO) within the service. This Task-card will be invoked where a Station Manager is mobilised to any operational incident or protracted event to outline actions to be taken in relation to any dual contract staff in attendance.
- NFRS HR-PO-006 Rest Period Policy has been updated and revised.
- Six separate dual contract staff engagement sessions have been ran by ACFO McNeill to ensure the new procedure is fully understood and embedded.
- A note has been placed on every dual contract staff member's Personal Record File.
- Engagement with staff across the service has been undertaken to raise awareness of the new procedures.

3.7 The new procedures have been tested at several significant incidents and challenging operational circumstances since their introduction – including for the full Strom Arwen response – and have been shown to have fully captured all dual contract personnel mobilised.

3.8 Longer term NFRS intends to provide further mitigations to add resilience to the actions already taken by increasing the on-call establishment, reducing the number of dual-contract personnel and introducing an integrated staffing software system which will allow automatic management of the issue.

3.9 Initial feedback to HMICFRS was provided orally by Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO) McNeil on Monday 29<sup>th</sup> of November when he fully outlined the CoC safeguarding processes that Northumberland Fire and Rescue (NFRS) has invoked since 1<sup>st</sup> of September 2021 during the Teams call with Alan Bell (HMICFRS Service Liaison Lead for NFRS). This was followed up with a more detailed call and explanation with Alan Bell on Friday 7<sup>th</sup> January 2022. Feedback from HMICFRS has been very positive and all relevant documentation to evidence the new procedures and polices has been provided.

3.10 A CoC panel discussed several CoCs issued during the Tranche 1 inspection phase – including NFRSs - on 12<sup>th</sup> January. Feedback from Alan Bell was that the measures taken were well received and were considered to address all aspects of the CoC recommendations.

- 3.11 HMICFRS are keen to see how the measures embed within service over a longer period and have indicated that they would like to send a small assessment team in early March to review the process, assess the evidence to date and interview dual contract, managers and Fire Control.
- 3.12 A provisional date of 9<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> March has been requested by HMICFRS for the facilitation of a formal review prior to a decision being taken on the formal discharge of the CoC.

#### **4.0 Additional Support**

- 4.1 Following the pre-publication draft report being received on Monday 27<sup>th</sup> September the NCC Leader requested a short external review of the CFC together with a review of associated staffing and operational service delivery modelling.
- 4.2 Several potential candidates to undertake this project were identified and provided to the Chief Executive for consideration.
- 4.3 A preferred candidate has been identified and discussions are progressing to scope out the review prior to engagement with CFO Hedley and the NFRS senior leadership team.

#### **5.0 Responding to the Report and Areas for Improvement**

- 5.1 Positively, of the 25 AFIs identified in the 2021 report, it is the view of the NFRS Service Leadership Team (SLT) that the Areas for Improvement are.
- not considered to be substantial and requiring notable change to existing service delivery models.
  - they have not introduced any improvement areas which the service was not aware of;
  - they do not require any adjustment of the current continuous improvement roadmap, and,
  - in most cases the AFIs are already in receipt of service attention, planning and/or action.
- 5.2 Progression of the AFIs contained in the final version of the HMICFRS 2021 report will be managed and quality assured via the new NFRS Performance Assurance Framework (PAF) and the Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP) governance model. This process has been subject to assurance review by NCC Internal Audit with a judgment that,

*“Internal Audit is pleased to note the improvement made with the action plan documentation and can confirm that the governance arrangements have been significantly improved. The new Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP) and Plan on a Page will capture all of the relevant information, provide*

*clear links to the source of the improvement action plan along with evidence of action taken.”*

*”This process should ensure that the CIP continues to be up to date and managing the current and priority improvement initiatives of NFRS.”*

- 5.3 The Areas for Improvement have already been uploaded into the CIP and the PAF process has been demonstrated to Deputy Chief Executive McEvoy-Carr by DCFO Binning and Deb Brown (Strategic Performance, Risk and Policy Officer). Arrangements are in progress to demonstrate the PAF / CIP more widely across the Authority.

## Implications

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Policy</b>   | <p>It is not envisaged that delivery of the continuous improvement plan (CIP) will have any impact on NCC policy.</p> <p>Specific NFRS policy documents may require development or amendment to reflect any changes required but none have been identified at this pre-publication stage.</p>  |
| <b>Finance and value for money</b>  | None identified at this stage. Potential for a transformation bid to be submitted to improve staffing data systems and platforms.  |
| <b>Legal</b>  | Addressing the Areas for Improvement which are included in the final version of the HMICFRS Rd2 report will support and assure the Fire Authority in delivering its responsibilities under the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 and other associated legislation, including the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 Act and health and safety legislation. |
| <b>Procurement</b>  | None identified although that may change as HMICFRS Areas for Improvement are addressed in more detail through the PAF / CIP.  |
| <b>Human Resources</b>  | <p>NFRS have amended HR-PR-006 Rest Period Policy as a direct result of the Cause of Concern.</p> <p>No other HR specific issues have been identified at this stage.</p>   |
| <b>Property</b>   | None Identified.   |
| <b>Equalities</b><br>(Impact Assessment attached)<br><br>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/><br><br>N/A <input type="checkbox"/> | <p>A full EIA will be conducted on any policy required to meet the recommendations and AFIs contained in the final published version of the report.</p> <p>An EIA has been produced for HR-PR-006 Rest Period Policy</p>   |
| <b>Risk Assessment</b>  | An overarching assessment of the risks associated with delivering the continuous improvement plan developed to address the recommendations and AFIs will be included in the NFRS strategic risk assessment   |
| <b>Crime &amp; Disorder</b>   | None identified at this pre-publication stage.   |
| <b>Customer Consideration</b>   | None identified at this pre-publication stage.   |
| <b>Carbon reduction</b>   | None identified at this pre-publication stage.   |
| <b>Health and Wellbeing</b>   | None identified at this pre-publication stage.   |
| <b>Wards</b>  | None identified at this pre-publication stage.   |

## **Background papers**

HMICFRS report of Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service (received December 2021)

## **Report sign off.**

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

|  |                                    |
|--|------------------------------------|
|  | Full Name of Officer               |
| Monitoring Officer/Legal                     | Suki Binjal                        |
| Executive Director of Finance & S151 Officer | Jan Willis                         |
| Relevant Executive Director                  | Cath McEvoy-Carr                   |
| Chief Executive                              | Daljit Lally                       |
| Portfolio Holder(s)                          | Colin Horncastle<br>Gordon Stewart |

## **Author and Contact Details**

Chief Fire Officer Paul Hedley

[Paul.Hedley@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:Paul.Hedley@northumberland.gov.uk)

**(Wk)** 01670 621114 **(Mb)** 07702 072022

## Appendix 1

| <b>Comparator between 2019 and 2021<br/>HMICFRS Report Chapter Summary Narratives</b>   |  |
|---|--|
| <p><b>2019 – Effectiveness Positive Comments</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The service understands its risk and has an integrated risk management plan (IRMP), the Fire and Rescue Plan, which it updates annually and uses to determine priorities.</i></li> <li>• <i>All main areas have their own departmental plans, and the service oversees them well.</i></li> <li>• <i>The service’s response to national risk is good and it is the national lead on wildfires.</i></li> <li>• <i>It takes the lead locally in training other agencies in Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles (JESIP).</i></li> </ul> | <p><b>2021 – Effectiveness Positive Comments</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>NFRS <b>has improved</b> its effectiveness</i></li> <li>• <i>It <b>has made progress</b> against most of the AFIs from 2019</i></li> <li>• <i><b>Improved</b> the way it protects the public</i></li> <li>• <i><b>Good use</b> of data to create risk profiles</i></li> <li>• <i>NFRS is <b>moving in a positive direction</b></i></li> </ul> <p><b>N.B. Re: 2019 Positive Comments</b><br/>NFRS has still been rated as <b>GOOD</b> for response to national risk, it is still the national lead on wildfires, and it is still the regional lead on JESIP.</p> <p><b>N.B. 2021 Report</b><br/>NFRS has also been rated as <b>GOOD</b> for protection of the public through fire safety</p> |
| <p><b>2019 – Efficiency Positive Comments</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The service has a clear strategic intent to do more collaborative work.</i></li> </ul>  | <p><b>2021 – Effectiveness Positive Comments</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i><b>Financial management is generally good</b></i></li> <li>• <i><b>NFRS has made good use of reserves</b></i></li> <li>• <i><b>Improved resourcing</b> of service’s prevention, protection and response functions.</i></li> <li>• <i>The service <b>collaborates with the county council and other fire and rescue services</b></i></li> <li>• <i><b>Pleased with how well NFRS manages its fleet and estates</b></i></li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>2019 – People Positive Comments</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>More positively, the service’s awareness of the importance of mental health wellbeing is growing. It has blue light champions and offers a range of occupational and mental health services,</i></li> <li>• <i>It updates its health and safety statement of intent annually</i></li> </ul>   | <p><b>2021 – People Positive Comments</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Pleased that the service has <b>made changes to improve its culture</b></i></li> <li>• <i>The service has got <b>better at ensuring it has the right people with the right skills</b></i></li> <li>• <i>The service is <b>moving in the right direction to improve how it looks after its people.</b></i></li> </ul> <p><b>N.B. Re: 2019 Positive Comments</b><br/>NFRS has enhanced the Occupational Health provision since 2019 and we continue to deliver effective mental health and wellbeing provision for staff.</p>  |





## Northumberland County Council

### COMMUNITIES AND PLACE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

DATE: 2<sup>ND</sup> FEBRUARY 2022

---

#### BRIEFING PAPER - EMPTY HOMES IN NORTHUMBERLAND

**Report of:** Elizabeth Morgan, Interim Executive Director of Public Health and Community Services

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

#### Purpose of report

This briefing paper provides an overview for members regarding the issue of empty homes in the county, the measures the Council are undertaking to bring them into use and the challenges that this represents. This is an update from the initial report that was submitted in December 2019.

#### Recommendations

It is recommended that members consider the content of the paper and comment.

#### Link to Corporate Plan

This paper is relevant to the “**Living - We want you to feel Safe, Healthy and Cared for**” priority included in the NCC (Northumberland County Council) 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.*

The paper also contributes to the priority “**Enjoying – We Want you to Love Where you Live**” which states:

*We not only want to protect and improve this quality but also make sure that the places where you live, work and play continue to evolve and grow whilst retaining and deepening their appeal.*

#### Key issues

1. In October 2021 there were **2070** long term empty (LTE) properties (empty for more than 6 months), 46% (952) of which are currently charged a higher Council Tax premium rate as they have been empty for 2 years or more. This may be a slight

underestimate as there are some limitations in using council tax data for this purpose.

2. The following 11 areas have the highest number of LTE. (These areas combined equate to 59% of the number of total long term empty properties in Northumberland)

|               |     |
|---------------|-----|
| Ashington     | 290 |
| Blyth         | 252 |
| Cramlington   | 103 |
| Bedlington    | 91  |
| Hexham        | 89  |
| Morpeth       | 78  |
| Ponteland     | 77  |
| Alnwick       | 69  |
| Berwick       | 69  |
| Amble         | 52  |
| Seaton Valley | 46  |

3. 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.
4. The private sector team have initiatives in place as a way to address such issues. For several years there have been dedicated liaison officers in areas of Ashington, Blyth and Lynemouth. This has helped to work more intensively in such areas and work closely with the residents and community groups to tackle poor quality housing and problematic empty properties. We have also implemented a robust tenant referencing scheme to ensure landlords are thoroughly vetting their tenants before letting properties.
5. Challenges of bringing empty homes back into use are widespread and can include internal and external factors:
  - o No co-operation from the owner - this make the process much longer and more expensive if notices must be served and legal need to be involved.
  - o The owner engages but has limited options e.g., negative equity or property is in poor condition, and they don't have the funds to make the necessary repairs.
  - o Legal Powers of other teams, for example building control when there is a dangerous structure or Planning enforcement when the amenity of the area is affected, have to be coordinated to ensure that the most appropriate option to improve the property is used.
  - o The Private Sector Housing Team do not have a dedicated budget that can be accessed to assist with bring empty properties back into use. The team

- are reliant on one off pots of funding so there is often no longevity with initiatives. An example of this is the funding from Homes England. This was used to bring the most problematic properties back into use via Purchase and Repair and Empty Dwelling Management Orders (EDMO's) as this funding is now spent this is no longer an option we can use to tackle empty homes.
- The Private Sector Housing Team is made up of just 4 officers who have a generic remit within private sector (so also cover property accreditation, illegal evictions, harassment cases, general advice, landlord forums/engagement) They are divided into two teams to cover the whole of Northumberland. It is therefore a challenge to ensure empty homes gets the attention it needs, particularly in the urban areas.
6. Over 800 properties have been brought back into use over the last 5 years, with an average of 160 per year. This figure has naturally been affected in recent times by Covid restrictions to working practices.

## **Background**

Homes become empty for a variety of reasons. While many routinely become empty as a consequence of being sold and are then re-occupied, other homes remain empty for a wide range of other reasons and for longer periods of time.

Empty homes can easily fall into disrepair or attract vandalism. They have the potential to impact negatively on the local neighbourhood, but also on the wider housing market. Minimising the number of long-term empty homes across the county reduces unsightly properties whilst also helping to improve the viability of local communities and so can have social, regenerative, financial and strategic benefits.

It is important to use coordinated interventions to bring empty homes back into use. The Council has a wide range of formal and informal interventions available to help resolve the many varied problems associated with empty homes, and the careful assessment of the most appropriate course of action for each case is essential to ensure that homes are brought back into use in a cost-effective way.

The Housing Strategy for Northumberland 2019 - 2022, adopted by Cabinet on the 6th August 2019, detailed the ambitions to achieve housing choice across Northumberland through the delivery of homes for existing and future communities and to support the Northumberland economy, alongside providing well-designed and affordable homes to meet the diverse needs of an ageing population.

This 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.

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. 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 Strategy forms 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.

### **Initiatives Supporting Delivery**

Empty and derelict properties are a wasted resource that could be better used to relieve homelessness and address housing needs. To address these issues in Northumberland a number of initiatives have been delivered by the Private Sector Housing team. Two of the most successful schemes has been delivered through funding secured from Homes England:

- **Purchase and Repair Scheme** - 12 properties that have been empty for more than six months have been purchased, repaired and let out at an affordable rent then managed by the Council. Two of these properties have been used as dispersed temporary accommodation to support the homelessness service. This has not only brought back into use some of the most problematic empty properties in Northumberland but has added to the council's housing stock. The properties are renovated to a decent homes standard and tenanted by people in housing need.
- **Empty Dwelling Management Order (EDMO)** - Through the use of EDMO powers 15 properties empty for over 2 years have been brought back into use. The Council have renovated these properties and let them out at an affordable rent, managing each property for a period of up to seven years before returning the property to the owner. EDMOs are an enforcement power that can be used to give the council the right to take over the management of an empty residential property in certain circumstances with a view to bringing it back into use and occupation. There are clear rules and regulations about the type of properties the Council can and cannot use an EDMO on and it is only used as an option of last resort. Although the EDMO process can be lengthy it is still an extremely useful tool for the council in terms of bringing empty properties back into use.

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

- When appropriate we use statutory enforcement powers to enforce the legislation to improve housing standards and ensure the health, safety and welfare of all private sector tenants
- We promote landlord self-regulation in the private rented sector through the Northumberland County Council Property Accreditation Scheme. The property accreditation scheme has recently been reviewed resulting in a more thorough and robust scheme and will be launched in early 2022. This encourages landlords to bring their properties up to decent standards and assists with letting the property out.
- The private sector team has worked closely with owners of empty properties in order to encourage and assist with bringing empty homes back into use. The team provide advice and guidance for owners of empty properties through training, landlord forums and other communication methods. Since 2015 the private sector team has, through a range of methods assisted to bring over 800 properties back into use.

## **Corporate Working**

- **Corporate Empty Homes Forum** - A quarterly Corporate Empty Homes Forum (CEHF) is chaired by the private sector team involving officers from Finance, Legal, Planning, Public Protection (Environmental Health & Building Control), Revenues (Council Tax) and Housing.

The purpose is to provide a forum where matters of mutual interest concerning empty homes can be discussed. Actions can be reviewed with regard to particular problematic vacant properties and future action be agreed. This has been a successful tool to ensure a corporate approach, however, it was recognised that many of the long term and complicated cases were held back due to lack of funds to do things such as works in default and legal action.

In 2020 the Empty Homes Working Group was therefore created to tackle those properties that were 'stuck' in the CEHF process. This group has an allocated reserve of £50,000 and is attended by senior managers. Complex cases are considered and with targeted work taking place to resolve problems including no

identified owner where the owner has died, and continued lack of engagement with a known owner. Because of the complexity of these cases only small numbers are considered at any one time allowing for focussed interventions.

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

## **Opportunities**

### **Providing advice and assistance to empty home owners**

In the first instance, working informally with property owners is often the most effective method for bringing empty homes back into use. Contact with the owner or person responsible will identify the specific reasons that home is empty and then officers can consider the opportunities available to bring the property back into use

Property owners are encouraged to join the Council's Property Accreditation Scheme, with officers providing guidance on any repairs or improvements required to meet the appropriate standards for private renting.

In many cases, properties either become empty or remain empty as a result of the owner's inability to finance repairs or maintenance issues. This can range from relatively small funding gaps through to the need to finance major structural repairs. It is often the case that the failure to resolve a relatively minor problem at an early stage (for example a slipped roof tile) can result in its longer-term impact threatening the continued occupation, especially where the owner is not aware of the disrepair or does not appreciate the importance of investing in repairs.

In some cases, properties remain empty due to the owner's failure to market the property for sale. This may be due to an unrealistic expectation of the current market value (especially where the property is in poor condition) or concerns regarding the fees and costs associated with selling the property.

The Council has a long-established rent deposit bond scheme which provides landlords with a guaranteed financial 'bond' in lieu of a cash deposit, which allows households who are unable to fund a tenancy deposit, the opportunity of renting accommodation in the private rented sector. This scheme is of particular interest to landlords who are seeking to bring empty homes back into use.

### **Dedicated resource**

In order to tackle some of the more problematic long term empty properties a dedicated private sector housing officer can be used to target specific areas. This involves an additional resource where the officer will cover a much smaller area (as appose to the whole of the North or South East like the other officers), often working closely with the community and local community groups to tackle the properties contributing to a number of issues in the area.

This has been successful in Lynemouth and pockets of Ashington. The officers have been able to better engage with residents and landlords and work together to tackle some of the most problematic properties and help to improve the conditions of private rented properties. If this model was to be repeated in other areas additional funding would be required.

### **Council Tax Discount Policy**

The recent council tax changes allow the council to maximise the level of Council Tax income from those homes that are left empty for over 2 years whilst also helping to encourage owners to return empty homes back into use. This is a useful tool to encourage owners of problematic long term empty properties to work with us.

### **Formal Intervention**

In the first instance informal action is very often the most effective approach to bringing empty homes back into use. Where informal action is pursued, the Council aims to provide transparency regarding the consequences to the property owner if actions are not completed. However, in some cases, informal action is either ineffective or inappropriate, and the Council has wide ranging powers to instigate enforcement action to secure improvements to empty homes.

Enforcement action can range from serving notices requiring repairs to be carried out, (e.g. repairing a gutter that is leaking onto a neighbouring property) through to the Council considering the use of compulsory purchase powers. Action can be taken using both housing and planning powers as set out in the Council's Scheme of Delegation.

### **Instigating Enforcement Action**

Where the Council takes enforcement action it will be proportionate to the individual circumstances of the case and will contribute to the overall aim of either returning the property back into use or reducing the negative impact that the property poses to the locality.

Action will be instigated that is timely and will assess the impact of individual empty homes on neighbouring homes, and the wider neighbourhood.

Where an empty home causes a severe negative impact within the neighbourhood, and where informal action is not completed by the property owner, formal enforcement action



will be prioritised. This will maximise the effectiveness of the Council’s interventions and reduce the negative impact that the empty home places on its neighbourhood. Enforcement action may not be appropriate where the negative impact of the empty home is not considered to be severe.

All reasonable costs incurred in taking the enforcement action will be recovered which may result in a legal charge being placed on the property to recover costs and interest accrued since the action was taken. In cases where debts have accrued following enforcement action, the Council may seek to enforce the sale of the property to settle those debts.

Case studies of where interventions have been successful are provided at appendix 1.

### **Implications**

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Policy</b>  | Supports the delivery of the Corporate Plan and the priorities within the Housing Strategy for Northumberland 2019-2022 and the Private Sector Housing Strategy 2021-2023   |
| <b>Finance and value for money</b>   | There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. Reducing the number of empty homes has a positive impact on the budget.  |
| <b>Legal</b>   | The EDMO process is completed in line with requirements of the Housing Act 2004.  |
| <b>Procurement</b>   | none  |
| <b>Human Resources</b>   | none  |
| <b>Property</b>  | Properties brought back into use through EDMO are managed by the Housing Management Team through a management arrangement. Those acquired through Purchase and Repair are added to the council-owned stock sitting within the Housing Revenue Account, increasing the Council's portfolio of available housing. |
| <b>Equalities</b><br>(Impact Assessment attached)<br>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/><br>N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Ensures fair access to housing  |

|                               |   |
|-------------------------------|---|
| <b>Risk Assessment</b>        | none  |
| <b>Crime &amp; Disorder</b>   | none  |
| <b>Customer Consideration</b> | By bringing properties back into use we are improving local communities for residents of Northumberland whilst increasing the amount of available homes, making best use of existing stock.   |
| <b>Carbon reduction</b>       | none  |
| <b>Health &amp; Wellbeing</b> | Improving the environment in which communities exist by reducing the number of empty homes and the consequences of that will have a positive impact upon the health & wellbeing of residents. |
| <b>Wards</b>                  | All   |

**Background papers:**

none

**Report sign off.**

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

|                             | Full Name of Officer     |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Monitoring Officer          | Suki Binjal              |
| s151 Officer                | Jan Willis               |
| Human Resources             | N/A                      |
| Procurement                 | N/A                      |
| IT                          | N/A                      |
| Relevant Executive Director | Elizabeth Morgan         |
| Chief Executive             | Daljit Lally             |
| Portfolio Holder(s)         | Cllr Colin<br>Horncastle |

**Author and Contact Details**

Kirsty Gilmartin/Victoria Ledger  
Private Sector Housing Manager  
01670 623070

[Kirsty.gilmartin@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:Kirsty.gilmartin@northumberland.gov.uk)

[Victoria.ledger@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:Victoria.ledger@northumberland.gov.uk)

## Appendix 1

### Empty Homes Case Study 1

The property is a substantial 2 storey semi-detached three-bedroomed house with gardens to the front, rear and side and a detached garage within the curtilage. The property is in a prominent location in a comparatively desirable area close to Blyth Town Centre.



Before intervention

The Private Sector Team had been actively involved with this property since February 2016 when the first complaint was received from the office of MP Ronnie Campbell who had received a complaint from a constituent stating the property was in poor condition and causing damage to a neighbouring property. Council Tax records showed that the property had been empty since November 2008, however it had been coded as a 'second home' and did not attract the empty homes premium being levied. An officer visited the property shortly after the complaint was received and investigation commenced to identify the circumstances around why the property was empty and to confirm the ownership and any others with a legal interest.

The property was causing a significant nuisance to the local community and the Police had been called out on several occasions by worried members of the public who were concerned about the anti-social behaviour that the property attracted in its condition. A referral was made to Planning in February 2016 who then opened a case investigation resulting in an enforcement notice being served requiring the owner to take the necessary steps to remedy the untidy land. The owner did not respond however no further action was taken by the Council at that time, but the case kept under review. The condition of the

garage was steadily deteriorating and was reported to Building Control during April 2018. The garage was not found to be an immediate risk, but with the ongoing complaints and concerns from the community it was kept again under constant review. A Community Protection Notice Warning (CPNW) was issued on 8<sup>th</sup> October 2018 requiring the owner to clear vegetation from the gardens and clear the accumulations of waste. The owner again did not comply with the requirement of the enforcement warning notice which had been issued under the Anti-social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014.

Throughout this time the Private Sector Housing Team had written to the owner on several occasions but had never received a response inviting them to actively engage with the Team to look at options to bring the property back into use. This lack of any response, the ongoing regular complaints and concerns from the Police and wider community and the deteriorating condition of the property and land resulted in the decision that the best course of action was to apply to the First Tier Property Tribunal for an Interim Empty Dwelling Management Order (EDMO) to effectively take control of the property and ensure its sustained long-term occupation as a family home.

Prior to any enforcement action taken the team needed to establish more detail about the property and the owner. With guidance from the council's legal team the officers were able to carry out an investigation to establish that the property was empty, and that the owner had not visited the property for several years. Correspondence was made with the utility company, who confirmed there had been no electricity or gas used at the property for several years. Regular visits to the property showed that the overgrown bushes outside of the front and back doors would mean no access into the property without being removed. Further visits to the owner's home address and discussions with neighbours to identify more details about the owner with hope that a mutual agreement could be made regarding the action taken on the property. This would then give enough evidence to prove that the owner had no intention of bringing the empty home back into use. This is often a time-consuming task; however, it is necessary to grant approval to take enforcement action.

Following the investigation an application was made for a Warrant of Entry at Bedlington Magistrates 15th July 2019. This was approved and officers were able to gain entry to establish the internal condition of the property. A full survey was carried out and estimates on the costs of works to bring the property up to a lettable standard. After consideration had been given to the viability of carrying out an Empty Dwelling Management Order (EDMO) it was agreed that the first step of the process, which was to serve a 3 month notice of intention to carry out an EDMO.

The required Notice of Intention (3 months) to apply for the EDMO was served 26th July 2019, during this 3-month notice period the officers were able to continue with their investigations and complete the required documents in preparation for applying for the EDMO. Once the 3-month notice had expired, and the team were satisfied the owner had not made any attempt to bring the property back into use the full application was made to the First Tier Property Tribunal. Once this had been acknowledged further instructions were given to provide substantial evidence to the tribunal and to copy in the owner with all

correspondence sent. The evidence file was completed which included a full officer statement of the action taken so far, evidence and any legal notices. This was submitted and a visit to the property was arranged by case officer from the property tribunal. The decision by the Tribunal to grant the EDMO was duly made and came into force 18<sup>th</sup> September 2020. There was a significant delay in the EDMO being granted due to Covid-19 and the courts closing due to the national lockdown.

Works started to repair the property straight away and were completed on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2021. The result now after 5 years of multi-disciplinary combined approach from across the Council is a much needed home for a family within Blyth who were in extreme housing need and had been seeking help and support from the Council's Homeless and Housing Options Team.



After intervention.

## Empty Homes Case Study 2

This case study details a semi-detached former local authority owned house, but subsequently privately owned which had been empty from 2008. It had been sold in 2010 but the property was consistently left unoccupied by the new owner.



Before intervention

Various officers from the Private Sector Housing Team had tried to contact and engage with the new owner with no response. This involved visiting the property and leaving calling cards, telephone calls and letters sent to their home address.

The property was subject of numerous complaints regarding the condition of the gardens back and front, boundary fences, fly tipping and ASB due to youths congregating and concerns were increasing amongst the community about the property remaining empty and the issues this may cause.

Following mounting complaints in 2017 it was considered the best course of action would be for the Council to consider proceedings to make an Interim Empty Dwelling Management Order by application to the First Tier Property Tribunal with the outcome being that once granted the Council would effectively take over the management and secure the occupation of the property. At this stage, the owner made contact and advised that she would be happy to consider this option due to lack of funds to carry out refurbishment herself. However, again lack of contact from the owner subsequently followed and officers were unable to contact the owner.

Between January and July 2018, the property was inspected/monitored on a weekly basis and numerous attempts were made to telephone the owner with follow up letters also being sent. The property was also referred to Planning for their investigation, but no action could be taken at that time as it was considered not detrimental to the amenity of the area under the Town and Country Planning Act and the condition of the property did not affect the street scene. However, as the condition of the gardens and fencing was clearly having a detrimental effect on the lives of those in the locality, it was persistent and not

reasonable, a Community Protection Notice Warning was served January 2019 requiring the owner to carry out the necessary works to the garden to remedy the ongoing situation.

There was no response to the warning letter and following confirmation that no work had been carried out the Community Protection Notice (CPN) was served on the owner in April 2019. The property was monitored and once established that again the notice had not been complied with and there were breaches evidenced, prosecution commenced and was heard in October 2019 in Magistrates court. The owner of the property was found guilty and was fined £2500.

Following the prosecution the gardens were cut back and cleared but no work to boundary or shared fencing were carried out and overall the failure to adhere to the requirements of the CPN and Court directions resulted in re-occurring problems with complaints again being received by the Council.

A second prosecution was prepared following the evidence of a persistent breach of the CPN and the owner was advised of the Council's intentions to do so. This impelled the owner to sell the property and the sale was completed in May 2021 with a new owner occupier who has from that date maintained their home.



After intervention

This page is intentionally left blank





## Northumberland County Council

COMMITTEE : COMMUNITIES AND PLACE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY  
COMMITTEE

DATE: 2 FEBRUARY 2022

---

### NORTHUMBERLAND INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING STATEMENT

**Report of** Rob Murfin, Interim Executive Director of Planning and  
Local Services

**Cabinet Member:** Councillor Colin Horncastle

---

#### **Purpose of report**

The Northumberland Infrastructure Funding Statement, which reports on developer contributions (via Section 106 agreements) was submitted to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, in December 2021. The purpose of this report is to explain the Infrastructure Funding Statement and summarise what it reported for the year 2020 / 2021.

#### **Recommendations**

The Committee is recommended to note:

- The purpose and requirement for an Infrastructure Funding Statement;
- The summary of the Infrastructure Funding Statement content for the financial year 2020/21; and
- The forthcoming changes to the Council's approach to developer contributions, upon adoption of the Northumberland Local Plan.

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

The Infrastructure Funding Statement is indirectly relevant to several priorities included in the Northumberland County Council Corporate Plan 2020-2021 as follows:

- How - our operating principles for financial prudence and being resourceful. The Infrastructure Funding Statement reports on financial and in-kind contributions. The statement helps to demonstrate every penny is spent wisely.
- Living - living, safe, healthy and cared for: Developer contributions are used towards the likes of sport and play and the provision of affordable housing
- Enjoying - love where you live: Planning contributions are intended to ensure the impacts of new development are effectively dealt with, including improved infrastructure in support of development.

## Key issues

1. The 2020/21 Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS) is the second such statement to be produced by the Council. The IFS is appended to this report. It has been embraced as a positive tool to help previous Council efforts to ensure transparency and accountability in the system, and to showcase the positive contribution that developer contributions have made in the County. The contributions can be seen to play a critical role in delivering much needed affordable housing and necessary infrastructure and mitigation measures, including education, sport and play, and coastal mitigation. Communication of this may influence public attitudes to development.
2. The total amount of money to be provided under any planning obligations which were entered during the reported year is **£5,628,195.06**, while the total amount of money received from planning obligations during the reported year was **£1,568,156.24**
3. The delivery of 328 affordable homes have been agreed in the reported year along with 175 school places. There was also **£1,117,970** secured by s278 Highway agreements during this year for highway improvement works.
4. The total amount of money from planning obligations allocated towards infrastructure and mitigation during the reported year was **£2,834,401.29**. Details of which are provided in the IFS.
5. The total amount of money retained at the end of the reported year (collected in the reporting year and previous years) is **£7,699,318.41**. The Council will work to ensure the money is effectively and lawfully spent.
6. The above figures are comparable to the previous year. The notable exception is in respect of money received, which is around £700,000 lower than in the previous year. It is difficult to say decisively why this is the case. However, housing development commencements and completions have declined, most likely on account of the pandemic. This has in turn influenced developer contributions or at least delayed their receipt. In addition, the IFS should be recognised to only ever represent a snapshot in time.
7. It should also be noted that it is not unusual to have a balance of unspent contributions. Many projects require several months and in some cases years, for the schemes to be implemented. Awards are closely monitored to ensure funds are spent in accordance with the legal agreements, including within prescribed time limits.
8. Central government feedback from the Council's first Infrastructure Funding Statement was positive, suggesting that it was an 'excellent document, very clear and informative'. Nevertheless, the document offers the public the opportunity to provide feedback as to how the document may be improved in future years.
9. As well as reporting on the facts, the document has been used to provide an explanation of planning contributions, and narrative (with photographs) on individual

case studies, to demonstrate how money has been used. It also discusses future infrastructure spending priorities.

## **Background**

10. Regulations<sup>1</sup> require Local Authorities to submit to government an annual Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS), where they are in receipt of development contributions via Section 106 planning agreements and / or where they are in receipt of Community Infrastructure Levy funds. Northumberland is not a Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Authority. However, the Council does collect developer contributions in-kind, and by way of financial contributions.
11. As explained in the IFS, planning obligations (frequently referred to as Section 106 agreements) are planning tools that can be used to secure financial and non-financial contributions, and to put in place certain requirements or restrictions, to ensure new development can be made acceptable in planning terms. It is the authority's responsibility to ensure that the requirements for obligations meet legal tests, which can be summarised as being necessary, fair and reasonable. It is also the authority's responsibility to ensure that contributions are spent lawfully and effectively and that these are reported on. The aim of the IFS is to improve transparency of monitoring and reporting, specifically in respect of Section 106 agreements for financial and non-financial contributions, but also Section 278 Agreements. The latter refers to agreements relating to alterations or improvements to a public highway, as part of a planning approval.
12. The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a fixed rate levy, charged per square metre of new development. To date, there is no CIL charge in Northumberland. It has not been possible to introduce the Levy without an up-to-date statutory development plan for the County; although the Northumberland Local Plan is now close to adoption. In addition, the government has signalled potential reforms to the Levy and to wider system of developer contributions. This is therefore being closely monitored. Should a Levy be introduced, it would be subject to additional evidence gathering and an independent examination process.

### Changes to Developer Contributions in Northumberland

13. The emerging Northumberland Local Plan will provide new policies against which planning obligations are secured. By their nature, planning obligations are specific to an individual development. They can cover a host of very different measures. However, it has been possible to include what is sometimes referred to as 'tariff style'

---

<sup>1</sup> The Community Infrastructure Levy (Amendment) (England) (No. 2) Regulations 2019

or 'standard' planning obligations in respect of major residential developments (i.e. typically of 10 or more units) in some instances. These include:

- Affordable Housing – The Plan introduces new policies for providing a percentage of affordable homes. The percentage is variable according to value areas;
- Open Space and Play – The Plan requires open space and play as part of new development, or where this is not possible, a financial contribution towards new or improved open space and play off-site;
- Healthcare – Where there are primary healthcare capacity constraints in an area, the Plan includes a standard formula by which a contribution will be calculated towards provision;
- Education – Where there are school capacity constraints in an area, the Plan includes a standard formula by which a contribution will be calculated according to pupil numbers;
- Coastal mitigation - The Northumberland Coast is of national and international importance for its wildlife. Developers are required to mitigate the impacts of development on protected sites. This is difficult for individual developers to do therefore they usually opt to pay a contribution to the Coastal Mitigation Service.

### **Implications**

|                                    |   |
|------------------------------------|---|
| <b>Policy</b>                      | The statutory development plan sets out planning policies against which planning obligations may be secured. The statutory development plan currently comprises the saved policies of the former districts, and the policies of Neighbourhood Plans. Upon adoption of the Northumberland Local Plan the existing local plan and core strategy policies of the former districts will be superseded.  |
| <b>Finance and value for money</b> | An important role of the Infrastructure Funding Statement is to communicate to the public and government the money and in-kind contributions via development and how these have been used to best effect / best value.  |
| <b>Legal</b>                       | Planning obligations are legal obligations entered into to mitigate the impacts of a development proposal. This can be via a planning agreement entered into under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 by a person with an interest in the land and the local planning authority; or via a unilateral undertaking entered into by a person with an interest in the land without the local planning authority under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. |

|   |   |
|---|---|
|   | The requirement to produce an Infrastructure Funding Statement is set out in the Community Infrastructure Levy (Amendment)(England)(No.2) Regulations 2019 Regulation 121A covers Annual infrastructure statements while Schedule 2 details the matters to be included in the infrastructure funding statement.   |
| <b>Procurement</b>  | There are no direct implications for the production of the IFS  |
| <b>Human Resources</b>  | The management and overview of planning obligation agreements and the IFS is done by a dedicated senior section 106 officer.  |
| <b>Property</b>   | There are no direct implications for the production of the IFS  |
| <b>Equalities</b><br>(Impact Assessment attached)<br><br>N/A <input type="checkbox"/> | There are no direct implications for the production of the IFS  |
| <b>Risk Assessment</b>  | There are no direct implications for the production of the IFS  |
| <b>Crime &amp; Disorder</b>   | There are no direct implications for the production of the IFS  |
| <b>Customer Consideration</b>   | The Infrastructure Funding Statement will be publicly available on the Council's website. It has been written in a way to help make it easy to understand. It is a visual document to help engage the public, with the inclusion of narrative to explain what the document is about and photographs of case studies. It also includes an executive summary and glossary to explain terms used. It offers the opportunity for the public to feedback so the Council may consider any improvements in future reporting years. |
| <b>Carbon reduction</b>   | The IFS is published and submitted electronically rather than being paper based. There are no other direct implications of the IFS on carbon reduction.   |
| <b>Health and Wellbeing</b>   | The planning obligations reported in the IFS include contributions to healthcare and sport and play provision.  |
| <b>Wards</b>  | All   |

**Background papers:**

Northumberland Infrastructure Funding Statement 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021

**Report sign off**

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

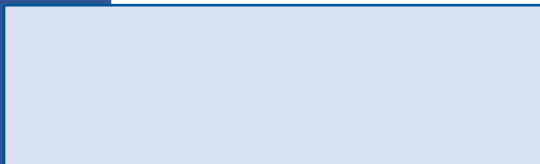
|  | Full Name of Officer |
|--|----------------------|
| Monitoring Officer/Legal                     | S Binjal             |
| Executive Director of Finance & S151 Officer | J Willis             |
| Relevant Executive Director                  | R Murfin             |
| Chief Executive                              | D Lally              |
| Portfolio Holder(s)                          | C Horncastle         |

**Author and Contact Details**

Heather Proudlock – Senior Section 106 Officer  
Telephone: 01670 624848  
Email: Heather.Proudlock@northumberland.gov.uk

Zoe Charge - Policy Team Leader  
Telephone: 01670 623622  
Email: Zoe.Charge@northumberland.gov.uk

## Northumberland Infrastructure Funding Statement



**From 01 April 2020 to 31  
March 2021**

[www.northumberland.gov.uk](http://www.northumberland.gov.uk)

# About This Statement

This Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS) is a report providing a summary of all financial and non-financial developer contributions, within Northumberland, for the financial year 2020/2021.

This is the second Infrastructure Funding Statement to be produced by Northumberland County Council. Recent changes to legislation (The Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations – Regulation 121A and Schedule 2) mean the Council is required to publish such a statement annually. This will typically be published in December of each year.

The Council views this as a positive tool, to further enhance the steps the authority has already taken to improve the transparency, accountability and monitoring of developer contributions. Reporting in this way will help local communities and developers see how contributions have been spent.

It should be acknowledged that data on developer contributions is imperfect, represents estimates at a given point in time, and can be subject to change. However, the data published in this report is the most robust available at the time.

## How to use this statement

The Infrastructure Funding Statement is intended to provide users with a guide to developer contributions in Northumberland. In summary, the statement comprises the following:

**Executive Summary:** This sums up the IFS, including the key headlines.

**Section 1** provides an introduction and background.

**Section 2** details the total amount of money agreed under all planning obligations in the reported year and summarises details of non-monetary contributions agreed in reported year, including details of affordable housing units.

**Section 3** details the money from planning obligations spent and committed in the financial year, and the money not yet spent.

**Section 4** details the money agreed from Section 278 Agreements (Highways)

**Section 5** offers some summing up and consideration of future priorities.

**Appendix:** case studies, some background to developer contributions to the Coastal Mitigation Service and an example affordable housing scheme

**Glossary** – There is a jargon busting glossary at the end of this document.





# Executive Summary

This is the second Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS) to be produced by Northumberland County Council. The IFS will typically be published in December of each year.

As Northumberland County Council is not currently a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Authority, this IFS does not report on CIL. It instead focusses on Section 106 agreements, and additionally reports on Section 278 (Highway Agreements).

The Northumberland Local Plan is the emerging statutory development plan for the County. The new Local Plan will set out the policies against which future planning obligations will be secured.

The total amount of money to be provided under any planning obligations which were entered during the reported year is £5,628,195.06, while the total amount of money received from planning obligations during the reported year was £1,568,156.24. These contributions will play a critical role in delivering much needed affordable housing and necessary infrastructure and mitigation measures, including education, healthcare, sport and play and coastal mitigation.

The delivery of 328 affordable homes have been agreed in the reported year along with 175 school places. There was also £1,117,970 secured by s278 Highway agreements during this year for highway improvement works.

The total amount of money from planning obligations allocated towards infrastructure and mitigation during the reported year was £2,834,401.29. Details of the allocations are provided in this IFS.

The total amount of money retained at the end of the reported year is £7,699,318.41. The Council will work to ensure the money is effectively and lawfully spent.

The Northumberland Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) has been developed in support of the emerging Local Plan. The Infrastructure Funding Statement will complement the IDP, and in the future, provide details of infrastructure anticipated to be delivered wholly or part through developer contributions.

## Section 1 Introduction

The terms 'Planning Obligations' and 'Section 106 agreements' usually refer to the same thing. They are legal agreements which can be attached to a planning permission to support development and mitigate the impacts of development.

The term 'developer contributions' may also be used. This can refer to the same thing, but can also encompass other 'contributions', namely the Community Infrastructure Levy and contributions for highway works linked to new development.

Page 76

Planning Obligations are planning tools that can be used to secure financial and non-financial contributions, and to put in place certain requirements or restrictions, to ensure new development can be made acceptable in planning terms.



Northumberland County Council currently secures planning obligations. It is therefore the authority's responsibility to ensure that the requirements for obligations are necessary, fair and reasonable. It is also the authority's responsibility to ensure that contributions are spent lawfully and effectively and that these are reported on. The aim of this Infrastructure Funding Statement is to improve transparency of monitoring and reporting, specifically in respect of Section 106 agreements for financial and non-financial contributions, but also Section 278 Agreements.



## Planning Obligations in Northumberland



Page 77

- In Northumberland, the requirements for planning obligations are set out in the Consolidated Planning Policy Framework and two Supplementary Planning Documents: Tynedale New Housing Planning Obligations for Sport and Play Facilities SPD; and Wansbeck Provision for Sport and Play SPD

Moving forward there will be some changes to planning obligations in the County. The draft Northumberland Local Plan is, at the time of publication of this document, at the latter stages of examination by the Planning Inspectorate. Once adopted, the new Local Plan will supersede many of the existing policies of the current consolidated Planning Policy Framework and Supplementary Planning Documents.

The Local Plan will include new policies relating to planning obligations, which have been informed by evidence of infrastructure and affordable housing need, and an assessment of viability.

Detailed guidance on Section 106 agreements is provided in national Planning Practice Guidance.

The following summarises the basics:

- Section 106 agreements are used to mitigate the impacts of development and make it acceptable in planning terms;

- Section 106 can only be used where they meet certain legal tests. That is that the obligations must be:
  - necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;
  - directly related to the development; and
  - fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development;
- Section 106 obligations can include:
  - Requirements for parts of a development to be used in certain ways, for example for affordable housing;
  - Requirements for certain works to be undertaken or for other requirements and/or restrictions on the form of the development; or
  - Financial contributions to address the impacts of development (the focus of this IFS).



## A Community Infrastructure Levy In Northumberland

The Community Infrastructure Levy, is a fixed rate levy, charged per square metre of new development. It can be used to fund a wide range of infrastructure required to support development across the local authority area. To date, **Northumberland County Council is not a charging authority i.e., there is currently no Community Infrastructure Levy charge in Northumberland.** The government has signalled potential reforms to the Levy and to wider system of developer contributions.

Should the Levy be introduced, details of the money collected and how it is spent will be reported in future versions of the Infrastructure Funding Statement.

Detailed guidance on CIL is provided in national Planning Practice Guidance.

The following summarises the basics:

- CIL is a fixed, non-negotiable, charge on most development of 100 square metres or more, or a new dwelling of any size.
- CIL charges must be set out in a Charging Schedule by law - this is subject to consultation and independent examination before it can be adopted.

- CIL rates are based on viability evidence. The charge may vary across the County and for different types of development
- CIL is principally to deal with cumulative impacts of development on infrastructure (rather than site specific matters usually addressed by a section 106 agreement)
- CIL can operate alongside/ in parallel with Section 106 agreements
- A proportion of CIL receipts can go to local neighbourhoods within which the CIL was received. In Northumberland this would be the Town and Parish Councils.
- Payment of CIL becomes due from commencement of the development.



# Section 2

1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021

Details the total amount of money under all planning obligations in the reported year and summarises details of non-monetary contributions in reported year, including details of affordable housing units.

**A.** The total amount of money to be provided under any planning obligations which were entered during the reported year is **£5,628,195.06**

This figure does not consider indexation (inflation/deflation) that may be applied when the money becomes due.

**B.** The total amount of money received from planning obligations during the reported year was **£1,568,156.24**

**C.** The total amount of money received prior to the reported year that has not been spent is **£1,329,280.47**

Page 79

Community  
Infrastructure Levy  
Regulations (2019  
Amendment)  
Regulation 121A  
Schedule 2 Section 3

Please note amounts shown in this report are maximum amounts and the final contribution paid can vary and is dependent on viability, phasing of the scheme and submission of any reserved matters which could alter the final payment. The reader should also be aware that proposed developments may never commence or can change during time. Trigger points for payments may never be realised for a variety of reasons.

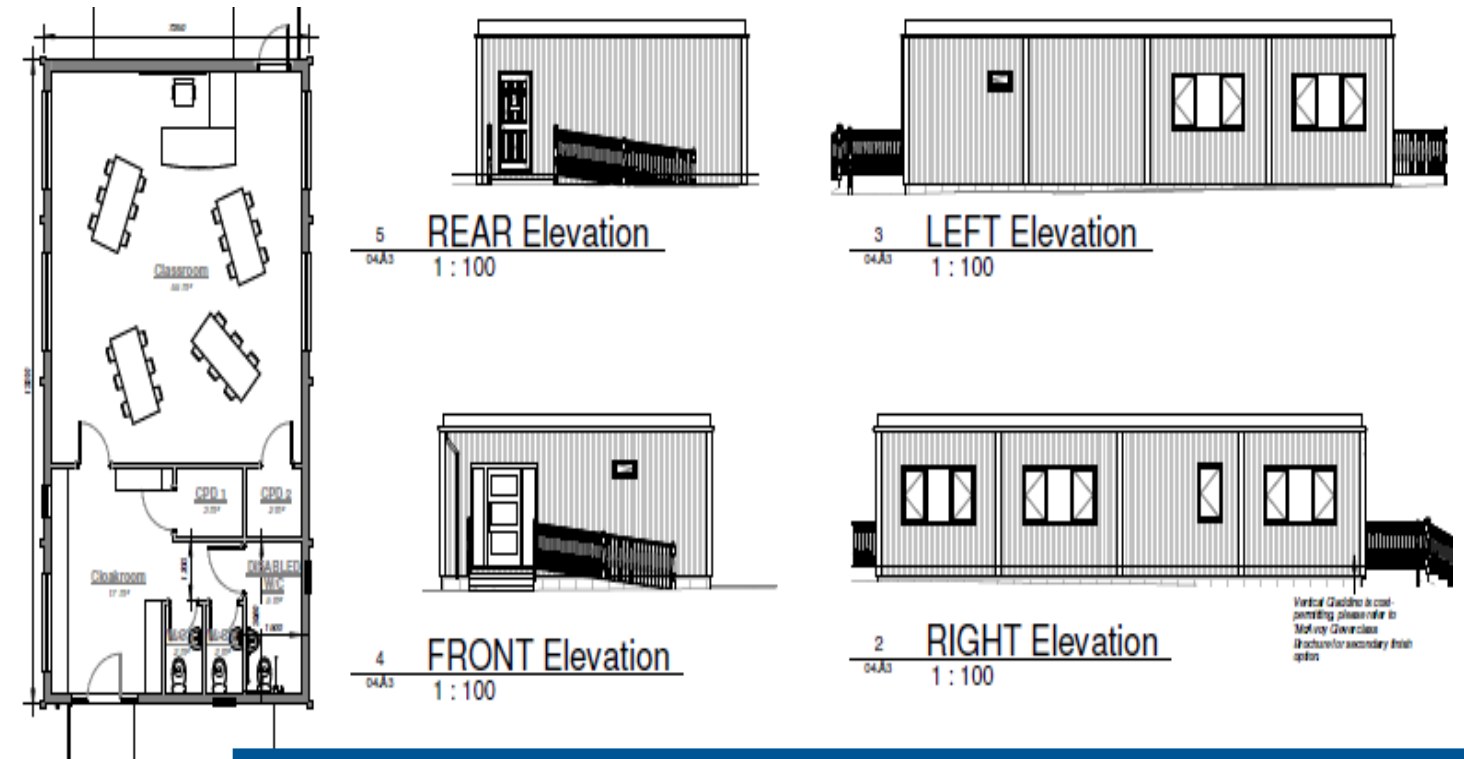
# Section 2 cont....

1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021

Details the total amount of money under all planning obligations in the reported year and summarises details of non-monetary contributions in reported year, including details of affordable housing units.

**D.** During the reported year the following non-monetary contributions have been agreed under planning obligations:

- i) The total number of Affordable Housing units to be provided is 284.
- ii) The following Education provisions have been agreed under S106 agreements: 175



Temporary modular school building

Page 80

|                         |    |
|-------------------------|----|
| Primary School          | 81 |
| Secondary School        | 61 |
| High School             | 28 |
| Special Education Needs | 5  |



# Section 3 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021

Details the money from planning obligations spent and committed in the financial year and the money not yet spent.

**E.** The total amount of money from planning obligations allocated towards infrastructure during the reported year was £2,834,401.29. Of this amount £2,175,056.21 was not spent during the reported year.

**F.** The total amount of money from planning obligations spent during the reported year was £1,840,516.59. Of this amount £1,106,280.90 was spent by a third party on behalf of Northumberland County Council.

## Page 8 of 10 Committed Funds

### Affordable Housing

The Council have received 4 applications for funding for Affordable Housing schemes seeking a combined total of £1,742,926, these are currently pending final decision in early 2022.

### Education

The next significant scheme on which \$106 monies will be spent will be for additional accommodation at to King Edward VI school (KEVI) for September 2025. This is to deal with the current bulge of students that have joined Chantry and Newminster Middle Schools in Year 5 in September 2021. Additional student places arising from the additional housing in the South West Sector Cramlington, specifically at Beaconhill Primary; however, the additional pupils do not appear to be impacting on schools at the moment which could be as a result of older estates in Cramlington now being mature and not generating as many children. There is a bulge of Year 5 students in Cramlington at the moment which would require additional accommodation at Cramlington Learning Village in September 2023; how this bulge will be dealt with is to be discussed with the Cramlington Learning Village Academy Trust early in 2022.

| INFRASTRUCTURE             | SPENT       | DATE SPENT |
|----------------------------|-------------|------------|
| St Mary's Scheme           | £73,320     | 14/01/2021 |
| Arch – Nelson Village      | £977,737    | 15/12/2020 |
| Blyth Academy 3G           | £60,000     | 15/12/2020 |
| NCC Open spaces            | £11,720     | 1/04/2020  |
| Bates Cricket Club         | £17,000     | 19/08/2020 |
| Ogle Drive play area       | £26,250     | 10/12/2020 |
| Beaufront First School     | £2,440      | 16/09/2020 |
| Acomb Parish Council       | £15,000     | 3/08/2020  |
| Northern Gymnastics        | £10,000     | 15/09/2020 |
| Arcot Planning Coordinator | £10,000     | 19/02/2021 |
| Ecology 2020/21            | £75,191.17  | 31/03/2021 |
| Education 2020/21          | £271,989.63 | 31/03/2021 |
| Kirkwhelpington PC         | £694        | 30/04/2020 |
| Blyth Town FC              | £22,845     | 16/07/2020 |
| Humshaugh Cricket Club     | £6,610.90   | 17/11/2020 |
| Wylam Lawn Tennis          | £3,000      | 8/03/2021  |
| Wall Parish Council        | £1,312      | 11/01/2021 |
| Tynedale Cricket Club      | £3,392      | 5/03/2021  |
| Highways -Moor Farm        | £164,471.29 | 31/03/2021 |
| Barclays Bank Wooler       | £20,000     | 31/03/2021 |
| Highways - Ponteland       | £64,423.60  | 31/03/2021 |
| Broad St Seahouses         | £3,120      | 01/04/2020 |

# Section 3 Cont...

1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021

Details the money from planning obligations spent and committed in the financial year, and the money not yet spent.

**G.** The following items have had money allocated towards them during the reported year with unspent allocations:

Please note expenditure of contributions are often time limited and many projects require several months and in some cases years for the schemes to be implemented. Awards are closely monitored to ensure funds are spent in accordance with the legal agreements.

**H.** In relation to money which was spent by Northumberland County Council during the reported year:

- Page 82
- i. The items of infrastructure that planning obligation money has been spent on and the amount spent are shown in the table:
  - ii) The amount of planning obligation money spent on repaying money borrowed, including any interest, with details of the items of infrastructure which that money was £0.00
  - iii) The amount of planning obligation money spent in respect of administration of planning obligations and monitoring in relation to the delivery of planning obligations during the reported year was £840.

**I.** The total amount of money retained at the end of the reported year is £7,248,972.38.

| INFRASTRUCTURE                   | ALLOCATED   | DATE ALLOCATED   | UNSPENT     |
|----------------------------------|-------------|------------------|-------------|
| St Mary's Scheme                 | £90,000     | 14 January 2021  | £16,680.00  |
| Ashington Town Team              | £49,861.96  | 31 March 2021    | £49,861.96  |
| Newbiggin Town Team              | £49,861.98  | 31 March 2021    | £49,861.98  |
| Arcot Planning Coordinator       | £10,000     | 19 February 2021 | £10,000     |
| Cramlington Town Council         | £10,638     | 10 December 2020 | £10,638     |
| Bedlington FC Meadowdale Academy | £10,000     | 3 December 2020  | £10,000     |
| Tynedale Cricket Club            | £18,663     | 9 September 2020 | £18,663     |
| Humshaugh Playing Field Trust    | £27,014     | 3 June 2020      | £27,014     |
| Tynedale Tennis Club             | £6,372      | 2 March 2021     | £6,372      |
| Highways 2020-21                 | £296,076.40 | 31 March 2021    | £296,076.40 |
| Ecology 2020-21                  | £187,887.20 | 31 March 2021    | £187,887.20 |
| Education 2020-21                | £498,900    | 31 March 2021    | £498,900    |
| Highways Moor Farm               | £210,000    | 31 March 2021    | £45,528.71  |
| Highways Cowpen Road             | £31,322.96  | 31 March 2021    | £31,322.96  |
| Highways -SWS Arcot              | £383,000    | 1 April 2020     | £383,000    |
| Healthcare 2020-21               | £94,200     | 31 March 2021    | £94,200     |
| Affordable Housing 2020-21       | £439,050    | 31 March 2021    | £439,050    |



# Section 4

1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021

## Details the money agreed and spent from Section 278 Agreements

Some development schemes require a contribution towards highway improvement works (in addition to any Section 38 or Section 278 agreements.) Examples of highway obligations can include, contributions towards the cost of installing Road Traffic orders, speed restrictions, new roundabouts, or improved pedestrian crossing. Photographs here show an improved pedestrian scheme in Blyth.



Pedestrian Crossing in Blyth



# Highway Infrastructure

## Section 278 Matters

Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations (2019 Amendment) Regulation 121A Schedule 2 Section 4

The following matters are agreements entered into during the reported year in respect to Highways Agreements under Section 278 of the Highways Act 1980. Totaling **£1,117,970**

Please see the allocation and bond sums as described below.

| Site                                       | Planning Permission Number                 | Bond Sum (£) |
|--|--|--------------|
| Acklington, North West of Acklington Drive | 18/00560/OUT, 20/03673/REM                 | £354,179     |
| K C Firmin Garage, Ashington               | 20/02303/FUL                               | £12,361      |
| Goodwills, Shilvington                     | 18/03613/OUT, 20/03098/REM                 | £112,970     |
| Duchess High School Annexe 2 Alnwick       | 20/1238/FUL                                | £10,000      |
| River Glen Restoration Project             | 20/02910/FUL                               | £32,523      |
| Land North East of Pegswood First School   | 19/02747/FUL                               | £105,000     |
| Bedlington Choppington Road                | 16/04731/OUT, 19/01457/REM (Phase 1)       | £182,648     |
| Kennedy Green, Beadnell                    | 16/01688/OUT, 19/04867/REM 19/04801/VARYCO | £105,845     |
| Tyne View Retail Park, Prudhoe             | 19/04872/REM; 16/02082/OUT                 | £120,000     |
| Yarrow Cottage, South Charlton             | 18/01853/FUL                               | £23,833      |
| Former Miners Welfare Site, Mickley Square | 17/03151/REM                               | £58,611      |

# Section 5

## Conclusions

The money agreed, received and spent under Planning Obligation agreements can be seen to make a valuable contribution to securing infrastructure and mitigation measures, which can support development, benefit local communities and support the provision of local infrastructure in Northumberland.

The Council will work, with stakeholders, to ensure that contributions which have not yet been allocated or spent, are appropriately and effectively delivered.

The Council will also work to continually improve the systems in which planning obligations operate, such as the mechanisms by which planning obligations are agreed, how they are allocated and how they are monitored. In respect of the latter, it should be noted that the Council has recently introduced fees for monitoring to ensure effectiveness of processes and procedures. Monitoring fees will similarly be reported in future Infrastructure Funding Statements.

Page 85

### FUTURE PLANNING OBLIGATIONS

Future income from planning obligations is difficult to predict. At this point in time the Council considers it cannot provide an estimate. This is in view of the new Local Plan on the horizon. The Council will however look to introduce forecasting in future Infrastructure Delivery Plans.

### FUTURE COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY

Pending potential national reforms to the Community Infrastructure Levy, should such a charge be introduced in Northumberland, future iterations of the Infrastructure Funding Statement will include details of the Levy collected and how it has been allocated and spent. It will also project likely future CIL income over the next financial year.

### YOUR FEEDBACK

Community and stakeholder understanding and engagement in developer contributions is a key objective. If you have any comments on the usability of this document or if there are particular matters you would like to see addressed in future versions of the Infrastructure Funding Statement, to enhance transparency, please contact the Council's Planning Department.

## Spending Priorities

Developer contributions will be used to deliver strategic policies in the existing development plan framework, and upon its adoption, those of the Local Plan.

The emerging Local Plan is supported by an Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP). The Infrastructure Delivery Plan has been developed in partnership with infrastructure providers. It will be routinely updated with details of projects or types of infrastructure that will be delivered, when, and where. The Infrastructure Funding Statement will complement the IDP, and in the future and provide details of infrastructure to be delivered wholly or part through developer contributions, including potentially the Community Infrastructure Levy. It is anticipated that in the main part, future planning obligations in the forthcoming financial year will be targeted towards the following:

**Affordable Housing** - Supporting the delivery of affordable homes is a priority for the Council. Evidence shows that many households in Northumberland cannot afford market housing. New development will be required to provide a proportion of affordable housing, usually on-site as part of new development.

**Coastal Mitigation Service** - Increased recreation-related disturbance on the coast is a particular concern because most of the Northumberland coast is

designated as SSSI on account of its nationally important bird populations; and much of it is also designated as SPA and 'Ramsar Site' (because of the international importance of some of these populations). In order to ensure that effective mitigation can be provided to address this problem, the Council has introduced the Northumberland Coastal Mitigation Service. This is a developer-funded wardening service to protect the coastal environment (see Appendix).

**Education provision** - new housing generates additional pupils. Where there are capacity constraints at nearby schools it may be necessary to secure developer contributions towards expanding capacity and creating additional pupil places.

**Healthcare provision** - there are known capacity constraints in some parts of the County in respect of primary health care such as GP practices. Where appropriate and necessary, developer contributions will be sought to address the additional needs generated by new development.

**Open space and sport and play** - the provision of open space and play varies across the County. Where appropriate, developer contributions will be sought to address provision. In the most part this will target improvements to existing provision, for example to improve quality or accessibility.

# APPENDIX Space for Shorebirds –

## Coastal Mitigation Service

Nearly all of the Northumberland coast is protected because of the nationally and internationally important bird populations that live there, including a wide range of migratory and wintering waders and breeding tern species.

Northumberland County Council's Coastal Mitigation Service is funded by developer contributions to address the impact of increased visitor pressure on these bird populations arising from housing and tourism development.

The service, called Space for Shorebirds has had a very busy year concentrating on engagement with residents and tourists alike. Helping people to understand how special the shorebirds are, with the key messages being to look out for groups of birds and to give the birds space to allow them to feed and roost without being disturbed.

Face to face engagement in bird and visitor hotspots is incredibly important, though rangers also use online presentations, parish magazines and several social media channels to share stories about the birds and promote key messages.

Dog owners are a particularly focus of engagement as off lead dogs are responsible for a significant proportion of bird disturbance. The service has developed a Dog Ranger scheme, which is a positive approach to recognise that owning a dog and caring for wildlife isn't mutually exclusive. If dog owners seem particularly interested about the birds we suggest that they consider making their pooch a dog ranger and taking the dog ranger pledge.

Some of our dog rangers have a massive social media reach so when they promote the message of Space for Shorebirds it's a huge help and people listen to their fellow dog owners.

Map Showing Contribution Areas



# APPENDIX Space for Shorebirds - Coastal Mitigation Service

As covid 19 restrictions have eased Space for Shorebirds has begun operating an events calendar; guided walks, shorebird watching for beginners and a Dog Ranger gathering all taking place in the past three months.

Spring 2021 was the first breeding shorebird season when nest protection work was initiated. Rangers were involved with setting up small fenced off areas for nesting shorebirds in order to reduce the impacts of people and dogs. Though the long term aim is to create alternative little tern nesting sites breeding ringed plovers that used the areas were a tremendous talking point with rangers talking to over 900 people in June alone. These conversations being a starting point to discuss the wider issues of Northumberland's shorebirds and disturbance.

Rangers also undertake a programme of monitoring work to increase understanding of the status of the important bird populations and of the impact of disturbance on them.

Since the summer of 2021 rangers have held 12 joint sessions with Coast Care volunteers to control pirri-pirri burr, a non-native invasive plant species that is adversely affecting the internationally important plant communities found on the North Northumberland Dunes.



Non-native invasive pirri pirri burr

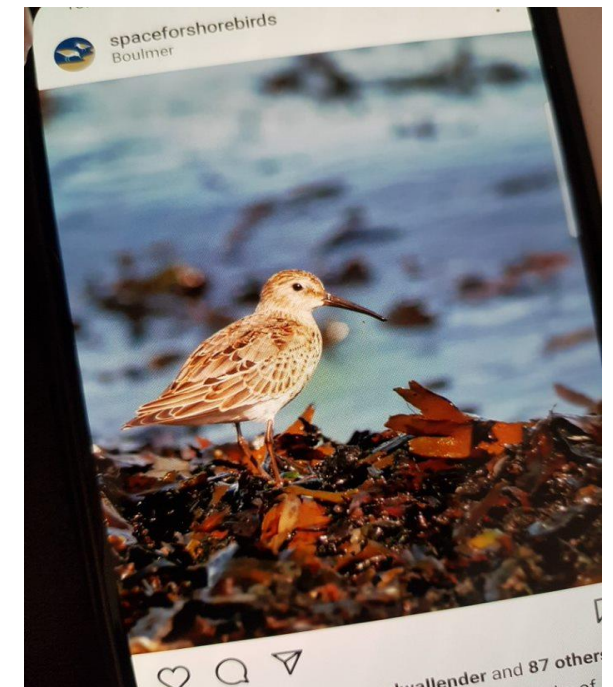


Shorebirds for Beginners session



Rangers and Volunteers undertaking pirri pirri burr control

Social media used to promote the birds (Dunlin pictured) and key messaging



# APPENDIX

## A Case Study: Affordable Housing Cramlington

As part of a structured s106 Agreement with Bellway Homes and Persimmon at their site near Manor Walks Cramlington, the Council agreed a commuted sum contribution of £899,000. The Council then reached agreement with Bernicia Homes (a Registered Provider of Affordable Homes) to pass on the commuted sum to enable Bernicia to deliver much needed affordable homes for older people in a perfect location.

The scheme which is currently being built is called 'Rosebrough' and will provide 48 stunning self-contained apartments for rent in the heart of Cramlington for those aged over 55.

Page 88

Rosebrough is conveniently located close to Manor Walks Shopping Centre, with a wide ranging offer of shopping and leisure facilities on the doorstep.

Cramlington Train Station is walking distance away with Newcastle and Morpeth only ten minutes away via a train journey. These stunning apartments are available to rent and incorporate intelligent, accessible design for lifelong living that is sleek, stylish and practical.



### Rosebrough Features

- Well apportioned elegant two bed apartments
- Fully fitted contemporary level access shower rooms
- Underfloor heating
- Fully equipped modern kitchens including white goods
- Balconies in all apartments
- Beautifully landscaped gardens
- Parking
- Secure building access and CCTV and Scheme Manager onsite
- Contemporary communal lounge
- Multi-purpose hobby room for activities and classes
- Guest apartment for visitors
- 24hr emergency alarm system
- Mobility scooter storage and charging
- Passenger lift to all floors and Stair lift
- Laundry facility
- Building and garden maintenance
- Repairs service
- Cyclical repairs and improvements
- Lighting (communal areas)

## APPENDIX

### A Case Study: Sport Southwest Cramlington

£50,000 S106 funding is to provide an exciting opportunity to make a significant impact to the local people of Southwest Cramlington by improving awareness and access to local sporting opportunities. There is already a plethora of sporting opportunities for people in Cramlington so this project will build on their infrastructure and; -

- A) showcase existing sports clubs, facilities and sessions
- B) Support development of these opportunities to cater for increased demand
- C) Identify gaps in provision and support development opportunities to fill those gaps.

This will be a three-year project to include new residents to the area as the housing development progresses.

A bespoke package will be developed and managed by a NCC officer who will engage with key partners to develop the programme, which they will then market and promote to residents of the new development.

This programme will enable specific targeted work to be undertaken with 3 particular demographics, 12-16 years and adults & families to learn further about their individual needs, barriers and attitudes towards sport and physical activity in the local area. The types of events and target demographics will be organised to suit the venues above and will be centered around 'taster sessions' which will be co-created with residents through outreach and community engagement.

A key element of the proposal is to undertake a detailed mapping and consultation exercise within the community to map out existing provision, to identify barriers and attitudes/ behaviours towards sport and to connect to non-traditional sports partners to help reach inactive participants.

The 3 year programme will include -

- Activities for all ages
- Activities for those who want formal sport in sport environment as well as those wanting informal activity.
- Activity in local venues including Northumberlandia, Alexandra Skate Park, Concordia Leisure Centre, Sporting Club of Cramlington

**APPENDIX**  
**A Case Study An example of a Non-financial Obligation**

Open Space and new cycle paths provided on new housing development site in Belford as part of a S106 requirement.





## APPENDIX

### A Case Study: New Play Equipment and New Sports Pavillion

Play Area at Ogle Drive, Blyth.

This project was awarded £26,250 from S106 contributions.

S106 money is often used to 'match fund' schemes so larger schemes can be provided. A great way to get good value for the contributions.



Corbridge Tennis Club Pavilion.  
This project was awarded £36,642 from S106 Developer contributions.

# Glossary

**IFS** – shorthand for Infrastructure Funding Statement (this document).

**Planning Obligation** - Planning obligations are legal obligations entered into to mitigate the impacts of a development proposal. Planning obligations are also commonly referred to as 'section 106', 's106', as well as 'developer contributions'. (A Planning Obligation can also be via a 'unilateral undertaking', entered into by a person with an interest in the land without the local planning authority.) Obligations can only be sought where they are directly related to the development, fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development, and necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms.

**Section 106 Agreement** – Section 106 Agreements are legally binding agreements made under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 between a Local Planning Authority and applicants for planning permission/developers.

**Section 278 agreement** - Section 278 Agreements are legally binding agreements made under the Highways Act 1990 between Local Highway Authorities and Developers. Section 278 agreements are required to secure alterations or improvements to the highway.

**Section 38 agreement** – Section 38 agreements are legally binding agreements made under the Highways Act 1990 between Local Highway Authorities and Developers. Section 38 agreements are required when the highway is offered for adoption as a public highway.

**CIL** shorthand for Community Infrastructure Levy (see below)

**Community Infrastructure Levy** – The Community Infrastructure Levy, is a charge which can be levied by local authorities on new development in their area to help deliver the infrastructure needed to support development. The levy only applies in areas where a local authority has consulted on, and approved, a 'charging schedule'. To date, Northumberland County Council is not a charging authority i.e. there is currently no Community Infrastructure Levy charge in Northumberland. However, the Council views the Levy as a positive tool, which may be implemented following the adoption of a new Local Plan for the County. Should the Levy be introduced, details of the money collected and how it is spent will be reported in future versions of the Infrastructure Funding Statement. The Community Infrastructure Levy can also be described as a type of 'developer contribution'.

**Local Plan** - In Northumberland, the Council is working towards the adoption of a new 'Local Plan'. A Local Plan, also referred to as a development plan or development plan document, is at the heart of the planning system, with a requirement set in law that planning decisions must be taken in line with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Plans set out a vision and a framework for the future development of the area, addressing needs and opportunities in relation to housing, the economy, community facilities and infrastructure – as well as a basis for conserving and enhancing the natural and historic environment, mitigating and adapting to climate change, and achieving well designed places. Until such time as the new Local Plan is adopted (currently in the latter stages of examination by the Planning Inspectorate) the development plan for Northumberland is made up of the saved policies and proposals of several Plans and Strategies produced by the former district Councils.

# Glossary continued...

**Infrastructure Delivery Plan** - (Sometimes referred to as **IDP** ) An Infrastructure Delivery Plan identifies the likely infrastructure requirements of an area, associated with development. In Northumberland, the current Infrastructure Delivery Plan covers the plan period, up to 2036. The Plan is the output of engagement with infrastructure providers to identify current infrastructure capacity, and to determine likely future infrastructure requirements based on the Local Plan. Focussing on strategic infrastructure requirements, the IDP seeks to identify completed, committed, and planned investment across physical, social and green infrastructure types. Where possible the IDP identifies where funding for infrastructure will come from. It also identifies where there are funding gaps. The collective funding gap could underpin the potential introduction of a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) in Northumberland.

**Agreed** – Contributions that have been agreed within a signed legal document. These contributions have not yet been collected. The collection of contributions is usually triggered at certain points of development, or upon commencement of development. If the planning applications are not implemented, the contributions will never be received.

**Received** – Contributions received, either monetary or non-monetary, by Northumberland County Council

**Allocated** – Contributions that have been received and allocated to a specific use or project.

**Spent/ Delivered** – Monetary or non-monetary contributions that have been spent/ delivered.

**Transferred** - Monetary or non-monetary contributions are frequently transferred from the Council to a third party which then delivers the contribution.

**This Financial Year or This reported year** - unless stated otherwise, this refers to the period 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021

**Affordable Housing** - affordable housing is defined in the National Planning Policy Framework as housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers). It must also comply with a specific definition of affordable homes (being either: affordable homes for rent, starter homes, discounted market sales housing, or other affordable routes to home ownership)

# Further Reading



Page 94

Please find the links to useful resources and contact details regarding data and information throughout this report;

To view the latest table showing all S106 financial contributions held and received by the Council. See [Section 106 Contributions Table](#)

To apply for Affordable Housing monies, please refer to the Affordable Housing protocol guidance and application form on the [Affordable Housing web page](#).

To apply for Sport and Play monies please refer to the [Funding for Sport and Play web page](#).

Looking for a copy of a S106 agreement? Please use this link to search our Northumberland map to help locate it. [Interactive Self-Serve Section 106 Agreement Map](#)

We appreciate all feedback from customers on the provision of this information. If you have any questions or wish to provide feedback, please complete the form below. We will aim to respond to your comments/questions within 20 working days.

- [Section 106 Feedback](#)

Alternatively, If you have any enquiries regarding any of the information in this document, please contact [s106instruction@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:s106instruction@northumberland.gov.uk)

# 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

Market Strategy

Tree and Woodland Strategy

Enforcement of 20 mph Zones

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

**2 March 2022**

**Library Service Strategy 2021-26**

To update the Committee on the implementation of the Strategy.

**Local Services – Highways Maintenance**

To provide an overview on the operation and challenges of Highways Maintenance.

**Climate Change**

To receive an update on the implementation of the Climate Change Action Plan.

**Active Northumberland**

To receive an update on the development of the partnership agreement, membership numbers, challenges, business plan and priorities.

**6 April 2022**

**Bus Service Improvement Plan**

To seek the Committee's comments on this report prior to consideration by Cabinet.

**Concessionary Travel Reimbursement**

To seek the Committee's comments on this report prior to consideration by Cabinet.

**27 April 2022**

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.   |
| 3<br>Page 98 | 4 August 2021 | <b>Draft Private Sector Housing Strategy 2020-23</b>   | <b>RESOLVED</b> that, the Cabinet be advised that the Committee supported the recommendations in the report.   | The Committee's comments will be considered by the Cabinet when it determines the report on 6 September 2021.  |
|              | 4.<br>5.      | 4 August 2021<br><br><b>Active Northumberland Annual Outcome Report 2020-2021</b><br><br><b>Active Northumberland Annual Service Report April 2020– April 2021</b> | <b>RESOLVED</b> that:<br>1. Active Northumberland's Annual Outcomes Report 2021-21 and Annual Service Report for 2020-21, be received.<br>2. Active Northumberland be thanked for their work during the pandemic, including support to communities, schools and health services, which had been incredibly valuable as well as reopening centres quickly when permitted.<br>3. The Committee were encouraged by the optimism for the future whilst noting the challenges ahead.<br>4. An update on the development of the partnership agreement, membership numbers, challenges, business plan and priorities be presented to the Communities and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee in early 2022. | The Committee will receive an update on the development of the partnership agreement, membership numbers, challenges, business plan and priorities on 2 February 2022. |



|         |                 |  |  |   |
|---------|-----------------|--|--|---|
| 6.      | 25 August 2021  | <b>Overview of the Fleet Replacement Programme in 2020/2021</b>  | <b>RESOLVED</b> that:<br>1. The work undertaken to deliver a challenging fleet replacement programme during 2020/21 and 2021/22, be noted.<br>2. Cabinet be recommended to consider an invest to save or business case to acquire more gulley wagons to increase capacity as part of the capital programme budget discussions.   | The Committee will continue to monitor this issue through annual reporting.   |
| 7.      | 25 August 2021  | <b>Northumberland Waste Management Strategy - Kerbside Glass Collection Trial Update</b>               | <b>RESOLVED</b> that:<br>1. The contents of the report be noted.<br>2. The success of the glass recycling trial scheme to date, in terms of high customer satisfaction levels and very high yields of glass collected per household, be noted.<br>3. The Communities and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee supported the trial and expansion of glass recycling across Northumberland. | A further report will be presented to the Committee on 27 October 2021 prior to determination by the Cabinet on 9 November.   |
| Page 99 | 6 October 2021  | <b>Integrated Domestic Abuse Services for Northumberland – Permission to Tender</b>                    | <b>RESOLVED</b> that the Cabinet be advised that the Committee supports the recommendations in the report, subject to consideration being given to extending the length of the contract to three years, with an option for a further one year to provide greater stability of service  | Cabinet considered the Committee's comments when it determined this report on 12 October 2021.<br><br>Further reports on the implementation of the Council's Domestic Abuse strategies will be presented to the Committee annually. |
| 9.      | 6 October 2021  | <b>Northumberland Climate Change Update</b>  | <b>RESOLVED</b> that the recommendations be agreed and further updates be presented to the OSC.  | A further update will be presented to the Committee in six months.  |
| 10.     | 6 October 2021  | <b>NE Bus Service Improvement Plan</b>   | <b>RESOLVED</b> that the presentation be noted.  | Further reports will be presented to the Committee as appropriate.  |
| 11      | 27 October 2021 | <b>Northumberland Waste Management Strategy – Outcome of Kerbside Glass Recycling Collection Trial</b> | <b>RESOLVED</b> that, subject to the comments above, the Cabinet be advised that the Committee positively supported the recommendations in the report.   | Cabinet considered the Committee's comments when it determined this report on 9 November 2021.  |

|     |                 |   |   |   |
|-----|-----------------|---|---|---|
| 12. | 27 October 2021 | <b>Policy for Street Naming and Numbering</b>                             | <b>RESOLVED</b> that the Cabinet be advised that the Committee supported the recommendations in the report subject to a review of the consultation process with Town and Parish Councils. | Cabinet considered the Committee's comments when it determined this report on 9 November 2021.                        |
| 13. | 1 December 2021 | <b>Local Services – Neighbourhood Services</b>                            | <b>RESOLVED</b> that the presentation be received.  | The Committee to consider issues arising from the report including the Tree and Woodland Policy and Markets Strategy. |
| 14. | 1 December 2021 | <b>Active Travel and Road Safety for the Journey to School</b>            | <b>RESOLVED</b> that the information be noted.  | The Committee requested that a report discussing enforcement of 20 mph zones be prepared for a future meeting.        |
| 15. | 1 December 2021 | <b>Destination Management – Structure and Future Funding Arrangements</b> | The Committee therefore <b>resolved</b> that the Cabinet be advised that the Committee supports the recommendations in the report, subject to the comment made.                           | Cabinet considered the Committee's comments when it determined this report on 7 December 2021.                        |