

# Public Document Pack



## Northumberland County Council

**Your ref:**

**Our ref:**

**Enquiries to:** Nichola Turnbull

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**Tel direct:** 01670 622617

**Date:** Tuesday, 28 February 2023

Dear Sir or Madam,

Your attendance is requested at a meeting of the **COMMUNITIES AND PLACE OSC** to be held in **CONFERENCE ROOM 2 - COUNTY HALL** on **WEDNESDAY, 8 MARCH 2023** at **2.00 PM**.

Yours faithfully

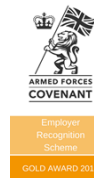
Dr Helen Paterson  
Chief Executive

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

**N Oliver (Chair), M Mather (Vice-Chair), D Carr, E Cartie, G Castle, A Dale, R Dodd, B Gallacher, N Morphet, J Lang and J Reid**



**Dr Helen Paterson, Chief Executive**  
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# AGENDA

## PART I

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

### 1. MEMBERSHIP

To note that Council on 22 February 2023 made the following changes to the membership:

Councillor Oliver replaced Councillor Reid as Chair.

A verbal update will be provided at the meeting regarding membership.

**10 Members (5:3:1 Ind Gp, 1 LD) (I Con place to GP)**

**Quorum – 3**

**Chair: *N. Oliver***

**Vice Chair: M. Mather**

Conservative	Labour	Independent Group	Liberal Democrats	Green Party	Ind Non-Grouped
D. Carr	E. Cartie	A. Dale	J. Reid	N. Morphet	
G. Castle	B. Gallacher				
R. Dodd	J. Lang				
M. Mather					
<i>N. Oliver</i>					

### 2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

### 3. MINUTES

(Pages 1  
- 16)

Minutes of the following meetings of the Communities and Place OSC, as circulated, to be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair:

- a) 7 December 2022
- b) 11 January 2023

### 4. DISCLOSURE OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Unless already entered in the Council's Register of Members' interests, members are required where a matter arises at a meeting;

- a) Which **directly relates to** Disclosable Pecuniary Interest ('DPI') as set out in Appendix B, Table 1 of the Code of Conduct, to disclose the

interest, not participate in any discussion or vote and not to remain in room. Where members have a DPI or if the matter concerns an executive function and is being considered by a Cabinet Member with a DPI they must notify the Monitoring Officer and arrange for somebody else to deal with the matter.

- b) Which **directly relates to** the financial interest or well being of a Other Registrable Interest as set out in Appendix B, Table 2 of the Code of Conduct to disclose the interest and only speak on the matter if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting but otherwise must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain the room.
- c) Which **directly relates to** their financial interest or well-being (and is not DPI) or the financial well being of a relative or close associate, to declare the interest and members may only speak on the matter if members of the public are also allowed to speak. Otherwise, the member must not take part in discussion or vote on the matter and must leave the room.
- d) Which **affects** the financial well-being of the member, a relative or close associate or a body included under the Other Registrable Interests column in Table 2, to disclose the interest and apply the test set out at paragraph 9 of Appendix B before deciding whether they may remain in the meeting.
- e) Where Members have or a Cabinet Member has an Other Registerable Interest or Non Registerable Interest in a matter being considered in exercise of their executive function, they must notify the Monitoring Officer and arrange for somebody else to deal with it.

NB Any member needing clarification must contact [monitoringofficer@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:monitoringofficer@northumberland.gov.uk). Members are referred to the Code of Conduct which contains the matters above in full. Please refer to the guidance on disclosures at the rear of this agenda letter.

## 5. FORWARD PLAN OF CABINET DECISIONS

(Pages  
17 - 22)

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

## OVERVIEW

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

### 6.1 Recruitment and Retention of On-Call Firefighters

(Pages  
23 - 28)

To provide the Committee with an update on the recruitment and retention of on-call firefighters.

*The Cabinet Member requested to attend for the following item is Councillor John*

*Riddle, Portfolio Holder for Local Services.*

## **6.2 Utility Companies on the Highway**

(Pages  
29 - 80)

To receive an update on the Council's implementation of the Northumberland Street Works Permit Scheme which sets out how utilities and highways road and street works are managed and coordinated by the Council in order to minimise disruption to the travelling public, increase compliance and ensure that all works promoters are treated fairly and with parity.

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

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

(Pages  
81 - 86)

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 2022/23 council year.

### **8. URGENT BUSINESS**

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

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

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

<b>Name:</b>		<b>Date of meeting:</b>	
<b>Meeting:</b>			
<b>Item to which your interest relates:</b>			
<b>Nature of Interest i.e. either disclosable pecuniary interest (as defined by Table 1 of Appendix B to the Code of Conduct, Other Registerable Interest or Non-Registerable Interest (as defined by Appendix B to Code of Conduct) (please give details):</b>			
<b>Are you intending to withdraw from the meeting?</b>		Yes - <input type="checkbox"/>	No - <input type="checkbox"/>

## Registering Interests

Within 28 days of becoming a member or your re-election or re-appointment to office you must register with the Monitoring Officer the interests which fall within the categories set out in **Table 1 (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests)** which are as described in "The Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012". You should also register details of your other personal interests which fall within the categories set out in **Table 2 (Other Registerable Interests)**.

**"Disclosable Pecuniary Interest"** means an interest of yourself, or of your partner if you are aware of your partner's interest, within the descriptions set out in Table 1 below.

**"Partner"** means a spouse or civil partner, or a person with whom you are living as husband or wife, or a person with whom you are living as if you are civil partners.

1. You must ensure that your register of interests is kept up-to-date and within 28 days of becoming aware of any new interest, or of any change to a registered interest, notify the Monitoring Officer.
2. A 'sensitive interest' is as an interest which, if disclosed, could lead to the councillor, or a person connected with the councillor, being subject to violence or intimidation.
3. Where you have a 'sensitive interest' you must notify the Monitoring Officer with the reasons why you believe it is a sensitive interest. If the Monitoring Officer agrees they will withhold the interest from the public register.

### Non participation in case of disclosable pecuniary interest

4. Where a matter arises at a meeting which directly relates to one of your Disclosable Pecuniary Interests as set out in **Table 1**, you must disclose the interest, not participate in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest, just that you have an interest.

Dispensation may be granted in limited circumstances, to enable you to participate and vote on a matter in which you have a disclosable pecuniary interest.

5. Where you have a disclosable pecuniary interest on a matter to be considered or is being considered by you as a Cabinet member in exercise of your executive function, you must notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest and must not take any steps or further steps in the matter apart from arranging for someone else to deal with it.

### Disclosure of Other Registerable Interests

6. Where a matter arises at a meeting which **directly relates** to the financial interest or wellbeing of one of your Other Registerable Interests (as set out in **Table 2**), you must disclose the interest. You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting but otherwise must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.

### Disclosure of Non-Registerable Interests

7. Where a matter arises at a meeting which **directly relates** to your financial interest or well-being (and is not a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest set out in **Table 1**) or a financial interest or well-being of a relative or close associate, you must disclose the interest. You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting. Otherwise you must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.
8. Where a matter arises at a meeting which **affects** –
- a. your own financial interest or well-being;
  - b. a financial interest or well-being of a relative or close associate; or
  - c. a financial interest or wellbeing of a body included under Other Registrable Interests as set out in **Table 2** you must disclose the interest. In order to determine whether you can remain in the meeting after disclosing your interest the following test should be applied
9. Where a matter (referred to in paragraph 8 above) **affects** the financial interest or well- being:
- a. to a greater extent than it affects the financial interests of the majority of inhabitants of the ward affected by the decision and;
  - b. a reasonable member of the public knowing all the facts would believe that it would affect your view of the wider public interest

You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting. Otherwise, you must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation.

If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.

Where you have an Other Registerable Interest or Non-Registerable Interest on a matter to be considered or is being considered by you as a Cabinet member in exercise of your executive function, you must notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest and must not take any steps or further steps in the matter apart from arranging for someone else to deal with it.

## Table 1: Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

This table sets out the explanation of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests as set out in the [Relevant Authorities \(Disclosable Pecuniary Interests\) Regulations 2012](#).

Subject	Description
<b>Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation</b>	Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain. [Any unpaid directorship.]
<b>Sponsorship</b>	Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the council) made to the councillor during the previous 12-month period for expenses incurred by him/her in carrying out his/her duties as a councillor, or towards his/her election expenses. This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.
<b>Contracts</b>	Any contract made between the councillor or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners (or a firm in which such person is a partner, or an incorporated body of which such person is a director* or a body that such person has a beneficial interest in the securities of*) and the council — (a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and (b) which has not been fully discharged.
<b>Land and Property</b>	Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of the council. 'Land' excludes an easement, servitude, interest or right in or over land which does not give the councillor or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/ civil partners (alone or jointly with another) a right to occupy or to receive income.
<b>Licenses</b>	Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the council for a month or longer
<b>Corporate tenancies</b>	Any tenancy where (to the councillor's knowledge)— (a) the landlord is the council; and (b) the tenant is a body that the councillor, or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/ civil partners is a partner of or a director* of or has a beneficial interest in the securities* of.
<b>Securities</b>	Any beneficial interest in securities* of a body



	<p>where—</p> <p>(a) that body (to the councillor’s knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the council; and</p> <p>(b) either—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. the total nominal value of the securities* exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or</li> <li>ii. if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which the councillor, or his/ her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners has a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.</li> </ul>
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\* ‘director’ includes a member of the committee of management of an industrial and provident society.

\* ‘securities’ means shares, debentures, debenture stock, loan stock, bonds, units of a collective investment scheme within the meaning of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 and other securities of any description, other than money deposited with a building society.

## Table 2: Other Registrable Interests

You have a personal interest in any business of your authority where it relates to or is likely to affect:

- a) any body of which you are in general control or management and to which you are nominated or appointed by your authority
- b) any body
  - i. exercising functions of a public nature
  - ii. any body directed to charitable purposes or
  - iii. one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union)

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# Agenda Item 3

## NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

### COMMUNITIES AND PLACE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

At a meeting of the **Communities and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee** held at County Hall, Morpeth on Wednesday, 7 December 2022 at 2.00 p.m.

#### PRESENT

Councillor J. Reid  
(Chair, in the Chair)

#### MEMBERS

Carr, D.	Lang, J.
Dale, A.	Mather, M.
Dodd, R.R.	Morphet, N.
Gallacher, B.	

#### CABINET MEMBER

Watson, J.	Healthy Lives
Wearmouth, R.	Deputy Leader/Corporate Services

#### OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

M. Baker	Service Director – Improvement and Innovation Service
J. Dennitts	Corporate Complaints Manager
M. Donnelly	Service Director – Wellbeing-Adult Services
P. Jones	Service Director – Local Services
S. Nicholson	Scrutiny Co-Ordinator
M. Taylor	Interim Executive Director - Communities and Business Development
N. Turnbull	Democratic Services Officer
N. Walsh	Head of Cultural Services

#### 25. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Cartie, Castle and Riddle.

#### 26. MINUTES

It was noted that Councillor Gallacher had given his apologies for the meeting on 26 October 2022 due to another committee meeting being arranged at the same time.

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

- a) 5 October 2022
- b) 26 October 2022

## **27. FORWARD PLAN OF CABINET DECISIONS**

The Committee considered the Forward Plan of key decisions (November 2022 to January 2023). (Schedule enclosed with the signed minutes).

The Scrutiny Co-ordinator reported that an item on the 'Produced in Northumberland' Scheme was due to be considered by Cabinet on 14 February 2023. It was agreed that it would be added to the committees work programme.

In answer to a question, he confirmed that all scrutiny members had been sent an email inviting them to the meeting of the Corporate Services and Economic Growth OSC in January when the Budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan and 30 Year Business Plan for the Housing Revenue Account would be considered.

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

## **28. OVERVIEW**

### **28.1 Electric Vehicle Charging Tariff Setting Methodology**

The report outlined the methodology and process by which the Electric Vehicle Charging tariff was set to cover capital costs, maintenance and repairs and adjusted in line with changes in electricity charges.

Matt Baker, Service Director – Improvement and Innovation Service, briefly summarised the report and methodology adopted. He explained that they worked with colleagues in Finance to track the charges of market leaders whilst setting the Council's tariff at the lowest possible point below the market rate, to ensure that all of the Council's costs were covered but where it would also encourage use of electric vehicles. This was in line with the Council's Climate Change Strategy and target to reduce emissions and achieve net zero by 2030.

Officers in the Climate Team also worked in partnership with colleagues in Local Services. The former led on the strategy and project management whilst the latter were responsible for installation of chargers and running of the back office and income collection.

Comments from members included:

- Whether changes were required to the Local Plan to allow use of solar panels in rural areas which would enable residents to use power generated for EVs.
- Use of DVLA data on EV car registration be cross referenced against demographic data for locations and property types. Officers agreed that this suggestion would be useful and would be taken into consideration when determining future locations.
- Whether alternative solutions could be used to allow residents with no off-street parking access across pavements to charge their vehicles if parked on-street outside their properties.

The following information was provided in response to questions:

- Information gained from the solar farm car port project at County Hall would be used to inform other schemes on the minimum viable scale required.
- Battery technology of vehicles coming to the market was improving.
- A significant increase in demand for electricity in rural areas could impact on the national grid and require investment in more sub stations, so locally generated renewable capacity would be positive.
- EV chargers were supplied with electricity from the national grid, which was greening its own supply, in line with the Government's policy.
- EV chargers were located where there were high levels of demand, e.g. in town centre car parks. More recently locations were being identified to enable EV use where residents did not have off-street parking. The latter required analysis of locations and property types. Initially this was focused on car parks near residential areas and in areas where requests had been received from residents. It was hoped that technological advancements in the future would assist the identification of locations when this became more challenging.
- Locations of EV chargers were being spread across the county to provide the best coverage.
- More information on the process to identify EV charger locations could be provided to interested members.
- The Council had a rolling programme to install 75 new EV chargers per year.
- 2035 was the target for the national grid to be decarbonised.
- Reference was made to value for money principles for projects as a whole when decisions were made as the Council wanted to give all residents fair access and avoid rural EV charger blackspots.
- Different tariffs were applied to the different types of chargers. Faster chargers were more costly as they were more convenient and popular. Usage data was available, if required.
- Letters would be sent to all Councillors in the near future to seek suggestions for the location of EV chargers in their local communities. Their responses would be used to inform future funding bids and determination of locations along with other data.

- Once vehicles were fully charged, they should be moved to allow others access to the facility. Some EVCP operators set up their chargers so that users incurred financial penalties if connected for more than the allowed period. NCC does not do this currently and in the case of on-street chargers has only placed enforceable restrictions on time limits at Rapid Chargers through use of Traffic Regulation Orders.
- As demand and level of use increased for on-street chargers, a decision would need to be taken whether Traffic Regulation Orders needed to be implemented to restrict use of bays to EVs only, parking time limitations or introduction of penalty charges within tariffs if the time was overstayed. The technology would be monitored as the Council developed its approach.
- The tariff had been set to cover the Council's capital contribution and excluded grants received by the Council.
- The Council used a prepayment system. Councillor Mather agreed to provide officers with details to allow officers to investigate alternative fuel cards/apps which advertised discounted prices.
- The EV Tariff Working Group was comprised of officers from Local Services and the Climate Change Team.
- Local Services were responsible for the collection of digital payments.
- The Council applied the same rate irrespective of location or demand. Implementation of different rates would be considered but was potentially problematic.

The Chair and several members expressed their gratitude to the officers for the clarity of the report. They were also strongly of the opinion that EV tariffs and facilities should not be subsidised by Council Taxpayers.

Officers confirmed that strategically it had been agreed that the EV charging scheme should break even, although some parts of the system subsidised elements elsewhere. Consideration would be given in the future as to whether tourism locations should be charged higher or lower rates. A member suggested that lower rates could be used to promote the county as a destination.

**RESOLVED** that that the report be received.

## **28.2 Corporate Feedback Performance 2021/2022**

The purpose of the report was to review the operation of the complaints process between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022, to keep Members informed about the effectiveness of current arrangements for handling customer complaints.

Julie-Dennitts, Corporate Complaints Manager, summarised the report which included:

- Investigation of corporate complaints where there was not a formal or regulatory process in place. This therefore excluded complaints regarding:
  - Adults, Social Care or Children's Act matters.

- Members Code of Conduct issues.
- Any formal appeals (including planning, parking tickets, legal cases, HR matters).
- They also investigated Executive enquiries, members enquiries and service requests, the latter being dealt with by the Customer Services Team.
- Data was provided on the number of informal resolutions, stage one and stage 2 complaints for the previous year and comparison of some data with 2019-20 and 2020-21.
- An update on the newly procured case management system which would make data retrieval and analysis of trends easier in the future once fully implemented.
- Feedback on cases investigated by the Local Government Ombudsman.
- The development of benchmarking data with regional and national colleagues.

The following information was given in response to questions from Members:

- The new case management system would enable more detailed analysis of complaints with real time data available for officers given access. The system was used by other Local Authorities and should address issues raised by members. The system would also be utilised by Information Governance.
- It was important that the number of complaints were not looked at in isolation but consideration was also given to whether complaints were upheld or not upheld, if improved communication was needed or if there were processes which could be done better. A review of all of Council information including Customer Service, compliments etc was used to identify any trends.
- Identification of support available for residents and staff would improve transparency and communication between all parties. It would also reassure individuals that complaints had been looked at properly under the appropriate process, which made it easier for responses to be accepted.
- Information received by the Contact Centre via telephone calls were forwarded to the Complaints mailbox and triaged as appropriate. Other methods were also available for complaints to be made. Emails would be integrated within the new case management system which would improve accessibility and provide updated links to register complaints.
- The website was in the process of being reviewed and updated as part of the Customer Experience Strategy Review.
- Analysis of corporate performance, key performance indicators, freedom of information requests along with data on complaints would enable analysis of performance by section.
- Complaints were valuable and seen as a positive tool which provided free feedback for the Council.
- Elected members complaints were dealt with by the Monitoring Officer which were outside of the corporate complaints process.
- There had been a large increase in the number of complaints received by all Local Authorities which had been discussed at a recent meeting of the National Complaints Managers Group. The increase could be due to

variety of reasons including the difficult last few years, changes to customers expectations, improvements in accessibility etc

- Suggestions for an agreed list of categories were being considered by the National Complaints Board to enable benchmarking.
- Stage 2 template letters ensured that individuals were provided with information on the function and independence of the Local Government Ombudsman and contact details if they remained unsatisfied with the Council's decision on their complaint.

Members thanked the Corporate Complaints Manager for the report which had been informative. They also expressed their gratitude to all the staff who worked in the complaint section as it was an increasingly challenging area of work. It was hoped that existing methods of making complaints would continue for those residents who did not have access to laptops and emails.

The Scrutiny Co-Ordinator agreed to schedule the next annual report when most appropriate with perhaps a demonstration of the new system.

**RESOLVED** that the report be received.

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

### **Communities and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee Monitoring Report**

The Committee reviewed its work programme for the 2022/23 council year. (Report enclosed with the signed minutes).

The Scrutiny Co-ordinator reported that the Chair and Vice had received a request for deferral of the Tree and Woodland Strategy which had been scheduled for the meeting in January 2023. However they had requested that the officer be asked to attend the meeting as scheduled to discuss the main issues for consideration for the updated Strategy and to enable members to set out their own priority areas for inclusion. The final draft could then be presented to the Committee in March 2023.

Issues raised by Members included:

- A report on the recent pesticide free weed control trial.
- Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

**RESOLVED** that the work programme be noted.

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

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items on the agenda as they involve the likely disclosure



of exempt information as defined in Part I of Schedule 12A of the 1972 Act, and

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

<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Paragraph of Part I of Schedule 12A</b>
9	3 -Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding the information).
<b>AND</b>	The public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the interest in disclosure because disclosure could adversely affect the business reputation or confidence in the person / organisation; and could adversely affect commercial revenue.

### **31. SCRUTINY**

#### **31.1 Leisure Review - Findings of the Review of NCC Supported Leisure Provision and Consideration of Future Management and Procurement Arrangements**

Following completion of an extensive review of Council funded leisure provision, the report provided an overview of key findings and outlined a proposed course of action to maximise both the health and wellbeing potential, and value, of future investment (copy attached to the signed minutes, coloured pink and marked Not for Publication).

The recommendations had been agreed by Cabinet when it had considered the report on 17 November 2022. In answer to a question, it was confirmed that the sensitive data gathered as part of the review needed to remain confidential ahead of the procurement exercise which would commence in the near future.

Councillor Watson commented on the complexity of the process and decisions being made by nearby Local Authorities to close some facilities. He referred to the significant investment in facilities by the Council in recent years and the excellent provision by Active Northumberland. However, given the size of the county, it would not be possible to increase access for those residents which were beyond 15 minutes' walk or drive of a leisure site

Marianne Donnelly, Service Director - Wellbeing-Adult Services, explained that some elements of the review had been undertaken in collaboration with Public Health to address inequalities within Northumberland, including preventative ill-health. It would also provide an opportunity to focus future investment based on evident need and delivery of a place-based offer.

In response to questions, it was confirmed that:

- Active Northumberland had been granted extensions to their current contract until 31 March 2024.

- The management fee paid to Active Northumberland had reduced in recent years. However, supplementary support to assist with increasing energy costs had continued.
- Measures were required to reduce reliance on public subsidies.
- The procurement exercise would not solely focus on value for money as other aspects would be factored in.

Members made the following comments when discussing the report:

- Improvements were required to improve the active travel infrastructure in the county to enable residents to use alternative methods of transport to access leisure centres.
- There were many private leisure facilities in the county therefore not all residents used Council facilities.
- The Council had a responsibility for the health and well-being of residents which included opportunities to address loneliness and social isolation.
- Discussions were being held with communities regarding use of local facilities in locations which did not have one of the 9 larger leisure centres.

Councillor Watson thanked the officers for undertaking what had been an extremely complex exercise. The Head of Cultural Services commented that Marianne Donnelly had taken the lead on the review.

**RESOLVED** that the contents of the report be noted.

**CHAIR** \_\_\_\_\_

**DATE** \_\_\_\_\_

## NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

### COMMUNITIES AND PLACE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

At a meeting of the **Communities and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee** held at County Hall, Morpeth on Wednesday, 11 January 2023 at 2.00 p.m.

#### PRESENT

Councillor J. Reid  
(Chair, in the Chair)

#### MEMBERS

Carr, D.	Dodd, R.R.
Cartie, E.	Gallacher, B.
Castle, G.	Mather, M.
Dale, A.	Morphet, N.

#### CABINET MEMBER

Riddle, J.	Local Services
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#### OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

A. Curry	Senior Manager – Commissioning
G. Gavin	Head of Neighbourhood Services
S. Nicholson	Scrutiny Co-Ordinator
N. Turnbull	Democratic Services Officer

#### ALSO PRESENT

1 member of the press.

#### 32. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Lang.

#### 33. FORWARD PLAN OF CABINET DECISIONS

The Committee considered the Forward Plan of key decisions (January to April 2023). (Schedule enclosed with the signed minutes).

The Scrutiny Co-ordinator reported that:

- The 'Produced in Northumberland Scheme' did not require a decision by Cabinet.

- Leisure Programme Update - Cabinet received updates of a technical nature which were not considered necessary for this committee.

Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy for Northumberland 2022 – Councillor Gallacher asked if the report could include information on the position during the Covid 19 pandemic and how policies had changed since.

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

## **34. OVERVIEW**

### **34.1 Storm Arwen Review – Adult Care**

Alan Curry, Senior Manager – Commissioning was in attendance to provide an update on the implementation of the Storm Arwen review’s recommendations on Adult Care.

He confirmed that Adults and Children’s Social Care teams had been working on data sets to ensure that records were up to date to enable identification of the most vulnerable residents. Protocols had also been put in place to store relevant data sets in a secure environment, identify those who need access in an emergency situation and how information would be shared with external partners.

They had been working with older persons care home providers to review business contingency plans for emergency situations and power outages. Some had plans to access their own generators or had alternative steps if there was a power outage including evacuation, transport and medication management. Plans for most of the older persons care homes in Northumberland were satisfactory and officers were continuing to work with the final provider to ensure that the outstanding issues were addressed.

He added that domiciliary care providers in rural areas experienced adverse weather conditions more frequently with plans that had been tested. This would include identification of individuals whose visits were essential and non-essential and contact with individuals in the immediate vicinity who could provide assistance.

Several members expressed concern that not all providers had made provision for a power outage or to access a generator. They discussed whether this should be a compulsory minimum requirement, as evacuation would be difficult if there was adverse weather, such as heavy snowfall, particularly in rural areas.

It was confirmed that the Council had not previously specified provision of a generator as a requirement and implementation could have cost implications via fees for those under contracts with the Council. Some business continuity plans referred to evacuation and in those circumstances were required to provide detail on transport arrangements and medication management.

The following issues were raised by Members:

- The funding provided by Northern Powergrid for community organisations was thought unlikely to be available to care homes who operated as a business. Some members had purchased generators for their own homes/business or had helped community organisations source equipment and did not think they were very expensive.
- Whether any grant funding was available to help care homes purchase generators in the different sectors, charitable organisations, private care homes or statutory sector.
- The importance of business contingency plans for the safety of care home residents.
- All parties needed to pay heed adverse weather warnings and consideration be given to the trigger point at which residents were evacuated.
- Alternative power solutions could include battery storage for solar panels and whether the Council could provide financial assistance or a loan to purchase equipment.
- Communication with vulnerable residents was particularly difficult in many areas when there was no power and this needed further consideration.

In answer to questions and comments raised by members the Senior Manager – Commissioning confirmed that:

- All care homes were inspected at least annually, with some being visited more frequently. Business continuity plans were reviewed as part of monitoring visits.
- Due to the frail nature of care home occupants, evacuation would only be carried out in extreme circumstances.
- Evacuation plans were required for a number of scenarios, not just adverse weather or power outage, for example, if there was a fire.
- Officers would continue to work with care home providers whose plans did not make reference to generators.
- New data sets had been formed from existing adult social care users with a need under the Care Act to identify those who were particularly vulnerable, to improve the accuracy of the data and to ensure that it was kept up to date.
- Adult Social Care required providers to have contingency plans regarding their own data but did not manage data for other departments.
- Cryptshare software was used to share information securely with external parties. Internally data could be shared via email or protected documents.
- The results of the scenario testing were not yet available but would be shared with Members in due course.
- Officers were liaising with care home providers regarding the risk of power outages, although the risk was minimal.

The Chair thanked the Senior Manager – Commissioning for the update. He was reassured with:

- The progress on data sets and information sharing.

- The confirmation that business contingency plans were reviewed annually and were appropriate for different scenarios.
- Exploration of alternative sources of power.

**RESOLVED** that that the update be received.

### **34.2 Tree and Woodland Strategy**

John Riddle, Portfolio Holder for Local Services, commented that the strategy required updating to incorporate changes such as new diseases as Ash die-back, initiatives such as the Great North Forest and Climate Change and carbon footprint to be taken into consideration.

Greg Gavin, Head of Neighbourhood Services was in attendance to discuss the updating of the Tree and Woodland Strategy. Due to the scale of the work involved in updating the strategy which would take longer than previous versions and involve internal stakeholders across the Council, Neighbourhood Services felt that it would be appropriate to focus on reviewing some key elements that they were responsible for within a Tree Management Policy, which would be referenced in the strategy when finalised.

He explained that three key aspects of the work of the Tree and Woodland Teams included:

1. Response to enquiries about trees including requests to undertake work.
2. Proactive tree inspections and proactive tree maintenance.
3. Tree planting (replacement of two trees planted for every tree felled).

The process undertaken to achieve the above was summarised as follows:

- Review current policy approach.
- Review current resource base.
- Review current performance in relation to tree management.
- Research regional policy approaches in other Councils.
- Review proactive tree inspection process.
- Develop new policy approach to maximise the use of resources, clearly articulate to the public how requests for work would be responded to and proportionately manages the risk of injury to the public or damage to property from trees.

Current key considerations included:

- Identification of areas where they were performing well.
- Any areas of performance that required improvement.
- Was the current policy, responding to enquiries and requests, clear and easy to understand?
- Was the current policy on responding to enquiries and requests an efficient use of our available resource?

- Was the current policy on proactive tree inspections effectively managing risk?
- How was the potential impact of Ash Dieback and other diseases on our Highway Network and in our Open Spaces identified?
- The approach taken to replanting in relation to felling works.
- The approach to ensure planting in urban areas was appropriate and would continue to be appropriate in the future.
- Replanting was suggested at New Hartley where a number of trees had fallen and been cleared after Storm Arwen.
- The policy should include reference to removal of trees if obstructing the highway following a collision.

The following concerns were raised by members:

- Trees suffering from Ash die back were difficult to identify until felled with the trunks crumbling to sawdust in the middle. It was estimated that 50% of roadside trees were Ash. The size of the problem could not be underestimated as there were likely millions of Ash trees in the county. They were also located in close proximity to power lines and telephone cables.
- Northern PowerGrid, BT, landowners and farmers needed to be included in discussions / consultations.
- Significant manpower would be required to fell large trees which were several hundred years old.
- Whether felled trees had any commercial value to offset the cost of removal or given to log banks. Felled trees contributed to biodiversity if left in situ.
- Whether replacement trees should be planted adjacent to roads.
- Trees on the roadside protected vehicles from strong winds.
- Material should be removed and disposed of in the safest and most environmentally friendly manner.
- Advice and information be given by appropriately qualified and proficient officers.
- Policies needed to be supported by resources.
- The importance of regular inspections and maintenance of trees along school and pedestrian routes in urban areas to avoid a repeat of the tragic death in a neighbouring authority.
- Landowners should be made aware of their responsibilities regarding trees with clear policies for all parties including farmers, landowners and the local authority.
- The effectiveness of new streetlights was diminished by nearby trees which required regular maintenance.
- Observation of bird nesting season and harvesting limited the periods when work could be carried out, unless a tree was identified as dangerous then it could be removed at any time.
- The Council should work in partnership with river authorities and landowners to remove trees from rivers, particularly those with significant silt issues.

- Tree roots were causing significant problems in some areas with uneven pavements and should be taken into consideration by planning when landscaping on new estates was considered.
- Reference was made to the National Park policy of the right tree in the right place.
- There should be reference to the findings of scientific research to determine the best approach with regard to diseased trees and whether they should be removed and used or left in situ.

The following information was provided in response to queries from members:

- Tree Preservation Orders would form part of the wider strategy with involvement from Planning.
- A significant number of the trees at risk had been brought down during Storm Arwen.
- Nearly every Ash tree was likely to be affected and could be identified by bare branches at the crown when the rest of the tree was in leaf. They were common on the roadside as they self-seeded and weren't removed from the verge.
- The Woodland Trust estimated that 80% of Ash trees would be affected. Affected trees were categorised in 4 stages according to the amount of canopy that was intact. A tree is typically in stage 4 when it has less than 25% of its canopy.
- The approach in response to trees dying from Ash dieback had to be considered against the Council's other priorities, risks and budget.
- Most the trees which had come down during Storm Arwen had a canopy of leaves which had acted like a sail. Trees affected by Ash dieback had a limited canopy in leaf.
- Since Storm Arwen, records had started to be kept of the species of trees which had failed or been felled, to assess the proportion which were Ash, which would help inform the risk and the amount of resource that could potentially be required.
- A programme of inspections was being carried out to assess the scale of the problem. During 2022, inspections had been carried out by Highways along the A69 with support from an external company. In 2023 they intended to carry out further inspections along the A189, key points along the A68 (north of the A69), A689, B6524 between Belsay and Morpeth to assess the extent of Ash trees along those roads and the stage of Ash dieback disease. This would assist officers make an informed assessment of the scale of the issue across the road network. Other work would be carried out for play areas, country parks and open spaces where there was high footfall. In addition, they would explore the use of the AI inspections (artificial intelligence) by Highways to limit the cost of inspections.
- The percentage of Ash trees would vary in different places.
- Trees were not necessarily planted in the same place that they were felled as the suitability of the location would be assessed against the current policy. Totals of trees felled were kept and trees replanted in appropriate



locations on a ratio which exceeded 2:1. Planting had to be appropriate, diverse and maintainable.

- Clearance work from Storm Arwen was still ongoing to ensure areas were safe. Consideration was being given to planting schemes at the Queen Elizabeth Memorial sites and also at Bolam Lake Country Park.
- Issues of biodiversity and carbon sequestration would be included within the wider Tree and Woodland Strategy.
- The cost implications of Ash dieback would be assessed following the investigation work explained earlier in the meeting with a bid for additional funding through the budget process, if this was required.
- It was not thought appropriate that a separate policy should be written solely for Ash dieback as there were other diseases affecting other species, such as oak and chestnut trees. The policy needed to be universal to ensure that nothing was missed.
- Timber which was easy to extract would have a value, otherwise removal could be cost prohibitive and the default would be to leave it in situ, subject to consideration of safety issues.
- National Powergrid were able to fell trees next to power lines.
- The remains of felled trees were often removed by others.
- Fallen trees from motor vehicle accidents should be removed if obstructing any part of the highway. These should be reported to the Highways team in the first instance, otherwise it was expected that hazards would be identified as part of the regular inspection regime. Officers would liaise with colleagues in Highways to check that trees were included as part of the inspection of the highways infrastructure following a collision to verify stability or if a contributing factor.
- Trees were being planted in specialist containers in urban areas to eliminate problems with roots and uneven paths in the future.
- A list of criteria be developed for officers on site for preferred disposal methods for a range of different circumstances.
- Homeowners who believed their property had been damaged from trees or roots from trees on Council land should provide information to their home insurance provider to contact the Council's insurer to claim for the cost of repairs.

The Head of Neighbourhood Services commented that the draft Tree Management Policy, incorporating some of the issues raised at the meeting, would be considered at a meeting in May/June. The Tree and Woodland Strategy would take longer as it would involve multiple departments.

The Chair thanked the officer and portfolio holder for their attendance. He enquired if a case for extra funding from the Government would be possible once the research on Ash dieback was obtained and analysed and the scale of the problem known. He also requested that consideration be given to the management of the new trees being planted so that the problems being experienced now were not repeated in the future. He welcomed opportunities for further consultation on aspects of the draft policy by email, if helpful.

**RESOLVED** that the information be noted and consideration be given to inclusion of the issues raised in the Tree Management Policy.

**35. REPORT OF THE SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATOR**

**Communities and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee Monitoring Report**

The Committee reviewed its work programme for the 2022/23 council year. (Report enclosed with the signed minutes).

The Scrutiny Co-ordinator confirmed with the Head of Neighbourhood Services that the work programme would be revised to defer consideration of the Tree Management Policy from March to June.

Issues raised by Members included:

- Improving understanding of the Section 106 process, particularly the applications considered by the Strategic Planning Committee. The Chair and Scrutiny Co-ordinator agreed to raise the issue of training with the officers outside of the meeting as it was not believed to be an issue for the committee.
- Whether there had been any changes to school infrastructure funding. This could be asked at the meeting on 8 February when the Infrastructure Funding Statement was scheduled to be considered.

**RESOLVED** that the work programme be noted.

**CHAIR** \_\_\_\_\_

**DATE** \_\_\_\_\_

## FORWARD PLAN OF FORTHCOMING CABINET DECISIONS MARCH TO JULY 2023

DECISION	PROPOSED SCRUTINY DATE	CABINET DATE
<p><b>BEST: Delivery Partners Resourcing</b></p> <p>On 17th January, Cabinet approved the Business Case for the Strategic Change Programme to be delivered across the Council over the period Feb 2023 – March 2025. 'BEST' is the new identity for the programme of works formerly identified as the 'Strategic Change Programme'.</p> <p>The BEST: Delivery Partners Resourcing Report seeks approval of the key decision to proceed with the Tendering and Procurement of Delivery Partners who will be engaged to support the design and delivery of projects.</p> <p>(R. Wearmouth/Kelly Gardner, Senior Service Director and BEST Programme Director- 07971008878)</p>	<p>Corporate Services and Economic Growth OSC 10 April 2023 - TBC</p>	<p>14 March 2023</p>
<p><b>Director of Education Final Report</b></p> <p>The Director of Education Annual Report presents a self-evaluation of where NCC Education are as a result of work delivered during 2021-22 and also seeks to demonstrate aspirations for the future across all areas of education and related supporting functions. (G. Renner Thompson/A. Kingham - 01670 622742)</p>	<p>FACS OSC 2 March 2023</p>	<p>14 March 2023</p>
<p><b>Energising Blyth – Strategic Sites Strategy</b></p> <p>The report will provide an update on key acquisitions to support delivery of capital developments in Blyth as part of the Future High Street and Town Deal Funded Energising Blyth Programme (Confidential report) (W.Ploszaj/ M.Turner - 07810 756551)</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>14 March 2023</p>
<p><b>Financial Performance 2022-23 - Position at the end of December 2022</b></p> <p>The report will provide Cabinet with the revenue and capital financial performance against budget as at 31 December 2022.</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>14 March 2023</p>

(R. Wearmouth/K. Harvey - 01670 624783)		
<p><b>Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy for Northumberland 2022</b></p> <p>The report provides Members with the draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2022-2026 for review and agreement (C. Horncastle/J. Stewart - 07771 974 112)</p>	<p>Communities and Place OSC 5 April 2023</p>	14 March 2023
<p><b>Market Sustainability Plan for adult social care</b></p> <p>To seek approval for the Market Sustainability Plan which the Council is required to submit to the Department of Health and Social Care as a grant condition. (W. Pattison/S. Corlett – 01670 623637)</p>	<p>Health and Wellbeing OSC 4 April 2023</p>	14 March 2023
<p><b>Permission to Award the Integrated Sexual Health Contract</b></p> <p>To seek permission from Cabinet to award the contract of Integrated Sexual Health Service in Northumberland. This service will be commissioned using the public health ring fenced grant. The grant conditions state that Local Authorities must provide sexual health services for its population. The contract is for 4 years. (W. Pattison/ John Liddell - 07929 775559)</p>	NA	14 March 2023
<p><b>School Transport Review Outcome Options</b></p> <p>At SLT on 1<sup>st</sup> November 2022 the full range of recommendations resulting from the system wide review of home to school transport were shared. In response to this, SLT requested a further paper to provide a summary with greater detail on the range of options considered during the review on where the transport service best sits within Northumberland County Council. This report provides the options as requested for evaluation and alongside this request's approval for the specific initiative to establish NCC delivered Independent Travel Training provision using start-up funding from the Council Transformation Fund (G. Renner Thompson/N. Dorward – 07811 020 806)</p>	<p>FACS OSC 6 April 2023</p>	14 March 2023

<p><b>The Link (Bridge Street Improvements)</b></p> <p>This report updates Cabinet and seeks approval of the Outline Business Case and other key decisions regarding the development and delivery of The Link project. The Link will improve the highway and public realm along Bridge Street which is one of the main vehicle and pedestrian routes into the town centre. It will improve connectivity and provide a greatly improved walking and cycling link between the town centre and the quayside. The project will support Blyth's vision to be a Connected, Vibrant and Clean Growth Town (W. Ploszaj/Lara Baker - 07919 217457)</p>	N/A	14 March 2023
<p><b>Trading Companies' Financial Performance 2022-23 - Position at the end of December 2022</b></p> <p>The purpose of the report is to ensure that the Cabinet is informed of the current financial positions of its trading companies for 2022-23 (R. Wearmouth/ M. Calvert - 01670 620197) Confidential report</p>	Corporate Services and Economic Growth OSC 13 March 2022	14 March 2023
<p><b>Update of Transport Asset Management Plan Policy and Strategy</b></p> <p>To seek Cabinet approval for the updated Transport Asset Management Plan, Policy and Strategy following it's periodic review, to take account of continued developments in asset management approaches and best practice including an increasing focus on the impact of climate change and prioritisation of active travel and minor amendments to the resilient road network. (J. Riddle/D. Laux - 01670 623763)</p>	N/A	14 March 2023
<p><b>Update on projects funded from the Public Health ring-fenced grant reserve to improve health and reduce health inequalities</b></p> <p>This report updates on the progress of projects previously approved by Cabinet to receive investment from the ring-fenced public health grant reserve for public health interventions to improve health and reduce health inequalities, for Cabinet to note the progress of the nine projects with approved investment from the ring-fenced public health grant reserve</p>		14 March 2023

(W. Pattison/J. Brown - 07796 312409)		
<b>Governance of Council Companies</b>  The purpose of this report is to propose the adoption of strengthened Governance arrangements in relation to the Council's companies and the relationship between the Council and those companies. The proposals address recommendations of the Caller Independent Governance Review to provide the foundation for decision making and the development of a comprehensive company governance framework for companies wholly or partly owned by Northumberland County Council (NCC). (G. Sanderson/Suki Binjal - 07592269310)	Corporate Services and Economic Growth OSC 10 April 2023	11 April 2023
<b>Leisure Programme Update</b>  To update Cabinet with progress on the Leisure programme (J. Watson/M. Donnelly 07517 553463)	N/A	11 April 2023
<b>Service Charges in Sheltered Accommodation</b>  The report will request permission to introduce Service Charges to all tenants in 8 Sheltered Housing Schemes in line with those currently charged at Arnison Close in Allendale. The HRA is currently subsidising these tenants at a cost of approx. £200k per year. (C. Horncastle/S. Ogle – 07976851270)	N/A	11 April 2023
<b>Social Housing Regulations Bill</b>  To inform members of the impending Social Housing Regulations Bill and the implications that has for housing, in particular the introduction of a regulatory regime. (C. Horncastle/ S. Ogle 07976 851270)	Communities and Place OSC 5 April 2023	11 April 2023
<b>Financial Performance 2022-23 – Position at the end of March 2023 (Provisional Outturn)</b>  The report will provide Cabinet with the revenue and capital financial performance against budget as at 31 March 2023 (provisional outturn)	N/A	9 May 2023

(R. Wearmouth/K. Harvey - 01670 624783)		
<p><b>Outcomes of Phase 2 Consultation about Education in Berwick Partnership</b></p> <p>This report sets out the feedback received from stakeholders arising from Phase 2 of informal consultation with stakeholders in the Berwick Partnership area and other relevant parties on the possible models of school organisation within both the current 3-tier system and within a 2-tier (primary/secondary) system. (G. Renner Thompson/S. Aviston - (01670) 622281)</p>	TBC	9 May 2023
<p><b>Leisure Programme Update</b></p> <p>To update Cabinet with progress on the Leisure programme (J. Watson/M. Donnelly 07517 553463)</p>	N/A	12 December 2023
<p><b>Leisure Programme Update</b></p> <p>To update Cabinet with progress on the Leisure programme (J. Watson/M. Donnelly 07517 553463)</p>	N/A	9 April 2024

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## Briefing Note to Communities and Place OSC

<b>Directorate:</b>	<b>Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Update on Recruitment and Retention of On-Call Firefighters</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>8<sup>th</sup> March 2023</b>

### Purpose of Briefing Note

On-Call Firefighters (aka Retained Duty System (RDS) Firefighters) play a critical part in how Northumberland Fire & Rescue Service (NFRS) safely responds to fires and other emergencies. 14 of our 15 stations operate with On-Call firefighters.

It is recognised locally and at a national level there are ongoing problems with the recruitment and retention of On-Call Firefighters. Most of the rural areas within Northumberland, and around the country, are sparsely populated which can make recruitment within these areas difficult. Therefore, there is a need to develop more flexible and innovative approaches to attract potential candidates within these areas.

In recent years, the number of On-Call Firefighters in Northumberland has fallen under the expected levels (up to 45 personnel short of 186 headcount). As a service, we have been continually developing and looking for innovative ways to improve our recruitment strategy to provide operational resilience across the communities of Northumberland.

This briefing note will provide some background and context of how we are responding to the challenges associated with recruitment and retention, along with the progress we have made in the last months.

### Background

#### *An Improved Recruitment Strategy*

The service has increased its capacity and capability to recruit and train more On-Call Firefighters. In previous years we typically committed to running one or two trainee courses per year. This model would typically deliver a maximum combined candidate number of 16 new On-Call firefighters per year.

NFRS have made a conscious effort to increase this number to three courses per year, which will now deliver a candidate number of 60 On-Call Firefighters per year. In real terms we have increased our overall capacity by 150%. Since introducing this change, we have recruited over 40 On-Call Firefighters.

This change in our recruitment strategy, along with the recruitment cycle now being continuous, will mean our overall number of On-Call Firefighters will continue to increase to meet our retirement and leaver profile.

### *Enhanced Recruitment Initiatives*

In order to ensure we attract and retain the right candidates for our training courses, we have committed a large amount of time, effort, and resources to developing various recruitment initiatives. These newly developed campaigns have improved our On-Call Firefighter recruitment and retention.

These strategies include:

- Investment in recruitment materials.
- Introducing ongoing On-Call recruitment campaigns.
- Increased our catchment areas from 5 to 8 minutes from the station.
- Offering more flexible and attractive On-Call employment contracts.
- Introduction of an enhanced disturbance fee.
- Facilitating a regular On-Call recruitment & retention staff forum.
- Utilising our Wholetime personnel to maintain On-Call availability.
- The recruitment of 2 x On-Call Support Officers \* (See below for the roles and outcomes)

### *Changes to the NFRS Website*

We have made significant improvements to our website in order to promote the role of On-Call Firefighters, and to gauge interest in key areas. We now have a dedicated link on the website where potential candidates can express an interest in the role. This not only promotes the role, but it also allows us to forward plan and align potential candidates to where we need them most. In 2022 we had a total of 245 submissions of interest, which is a huge increase in anything we have previously received.

### *Introduction Of On-Call Support Officers \**

On-Call support officers were introduced approximately 18 months ago. A subsequent 12 monthly review of the role was undertaken in July, with the following outcomes and outputs being delivered:

#### Operational Cover

- 2,449 hours providing On-Call cover at various locations throughout the service area.
- 112 hours attending operational incidents at various locations throughout the service area.

By utilising the 2 On-Call support officers to provide additional availability to stations where it is required, it can be determined that this additional staffing coverage has increased the overall staffing availability across a wide range of our stations. Additionally, utilising On-Call support officers has prevented the need to send a member of the wholetime duty system to provide cover, and consequently reduce cover in key areas.

### **Community Risk Reduction Work**

In addition to improving the operational cover, the following value has also been gained from the On-Call support officers:

- 50 - Safe and Well Visits.
- 50 - Periodic equipment checks plus input.
- 6 - Appliance changeovers.
- 20 - Hydrant inspections.
- 5 - Site Specific Risk Information Visits.
- 4 - School engagements/visits.
- 15 - Equipment defect reporting and equipment check ordering.
- 6 - Weekly station and equipment check at Holy Island.
- 2 - Transportation of vehicle for exercises/training.
- 4 - Attendance at Exercises as participants & observers.
- Development of station staff (CFRMIS, Redkite, FF development)
- Redkite, CFRMIS, and IRS input.
- Amendment of Weekly, Monthly, and Quarterly test sheets.
- Exercise planning for RDS stations.
- Assist HR with contacting potential recruits for RDS assessments or interview dates.
- Assist Training, Assurance & Safety (TAS) with facilitating training courses.
- Attendance at meetings (Incl. RDS Recruitment and Retention Subgroup, Promotion, and development workshops, Alnwick/Berwick/Prudhoe/Hexham Victim Offender Location (VOL) Meetings, Community Risk & Response Manager Meetings)
- Attendance at On-Call recruitment days.

NFRS have also invested in the On-Call Support Officer's role by training them to a Level 3 standard in fire safety. This allows them to conduct fire safety inspections of businesses across the communities of Northumberland. This will support our process of gathering accurate and up to date risk information.

### **Changes To On-Call Contracts**

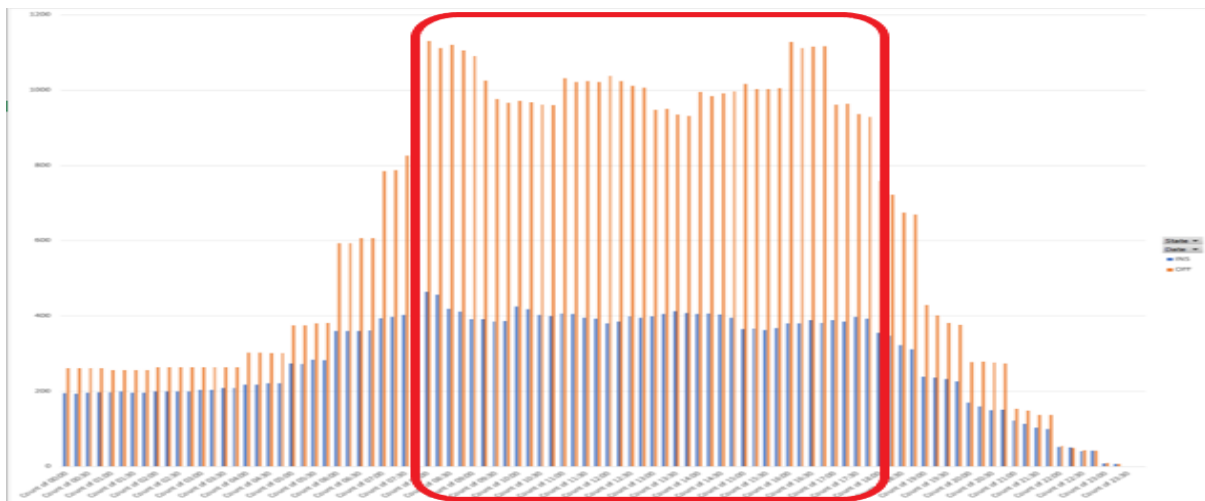
In the past our approach to offering On-Call contracts to prospective candidates has not provided a great deal of flexibility. In line with the National Joint Council "Grey Book" Working Conditions, NFRS offered contracts for either full availability (120 hours + per week), or restricted availability (circa 90-120 hours per week). Both existing contracts represent a significant individual commitment to meet the contract hours, and more importantly did not always reflect the station's availability requirements and the societal changes for that location.

For instance, often stations require daytime/weekday cover and on occasions, the individuals who have been able to offer this, could not commit to a 90+ hour contract per week (See figure 1 below: which shows the availability gap during the daytime hours of between 0800-1800).

We have now changed our approach to contracts, which allows individuals to apply for the role who may be able to provide critical hour coverage, but not necessarily be able to commit to the previous and inflexible hours from previous employment contracts.

This flexible approach means that the role of an On-Call Firefighter is more accessible to a larger and more diverse range of applicants. Furthermore, this will increase our resilience and improve the On-Call appliance availability.

**Figure 1**



### **Operational Activity Rates and Establishment Figures**

Each single appliance On-Call station has a Full Time Equivalent (FTE) establishment of 10. The two appliance On-Call stations have an FTE of 15. The service will also endeavor to achieve these establishment figures, however there is also a need to be cognisance of other staffing and hourly contracts which may require the need to have bespoke personnel levels for each station.

Therefore, the need to have more personnel at busier stations needs to be considered. Additionally, there may also be a need to increase the number of FTE at an On-Call station if there is a need to increase cover for certain periods of time, which is difficult for the current crew to achieve. By considering the incident data and risk profile we have made a conscious effort to evaluate and where necessary increase the FTE establishments in key locations to support our On-Call availability while providing an effective response to operational incidents or events that may impact the community.

### **Looking Forward**

We will continue to develop more flexible and innovative approaches to the recruitment and retention of On-Call firefighters. As part of our Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP), we will continue to evaluate our service delivery model, including a review of

our fleet and equipment to ensure we are matching our resources in line with the current and emerging risks to the communities of Northumberland.

An integral part of our CRMP is the ability to review our service delivery model, by doing so we can plan to match resources to risk more effectively. Having our staffing models at the correct Target Operating models will provide a modern, flexible, and resilient response model which is ready to deploy safely across the communities of Northumberland.

NFRS will continue to look for new and alternative approaches to how we deliver a safe, efficient, and effective Fire and Rescue Service for the people and communities of Northumberland.

### **Report Author**

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## Briefing Note to Communities and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee

<b>Directorate:</b>	<b>Local Services</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Utility Companies on the Highway</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>8 March 2023</b>

### Purpose of Briefing Note

The Northumberland County Council Street Works Permit Scheme was implemented in February 2020. This briefing note aims to provide an update on how utilities and highways road and street works are managed and coordinated by the Council in order to minimise disruption to the travelling public, increase compliance and ensure that all works promoters are treated fairly and with parity.

Full details of the permit scheme are available on the council's website at [Northumberland County Council - Roadworks, closures & diversions](#) under the section 'Streetworks Permit Scheme'

### Background

The County Council replaced its street works noticing scheme with a street works permit scheme in February 2020. The permit scheme manages all road and street works undertaken by statutory undertakers on Northumberland's public highways. The permit scheme requires all statutory undertakers to seek 'permission' from the Council to undertake work on or in the highway. Where emergency works are to be undertaken, the utility company must submit a permit to the Council within 2 hours of commencing the work or within 2 hours of the next working day if the works commenced on a weekend. This may sometimes result in a permit being granted retrospectively.

When assessing a permit, the Streetworks team not only check the availability of the road space requested but also give consideration to any work in the surrounding area to avoid works conflicts, as well as actively promoting any opportunities for collaborative working to reduce the days of occupation on the network. Conditions are placed on the permit to ensure the work is carried out in the most efficient manner possible; an example of this would be limiting working hours outside a school to avoid drop off and pick up times when traffic flows are at a peak, when congestion is most likely to occur. Any works promoter that fails to apply for a permit when required or adhere to the permit conditions as agreed may be subject to a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN).

It is important to note that not all works on the highway are agreed through the permit scheme. Therefore, an organisation undertaking the work must have statutory powers, such as utility companies or local authority highways. Other works by private contractors will be done under different processes such as Highways Act 1980 Section 50 licences (applies to anyone that does not have statutory rights to work on/in the highway), or Highways Act 1980 Section 278 works (which enable developers to enter into a legal agreement with the Council, to make alterations and improvements to a public highway, as part of a planning application).

The specific objectives of the Northumberland County Council Street Works Permit Scheme are:

- **Coordination** - reduce occupation of the highway for both street and highway works in order to minimise disruption to the travelling public;
- **Compliance** - improve compliance with the relevant codes of practice and conditions;
- **Information** - ensure accurate information is available to the public through improved quality of information received from all works promoters;
- **Fairness** - ensure all works promoters are treated fairly and with parity;
- **Collaboration** - encourage collaborative working between all works promoters.

Under the permit scheme utility companies are charged a fee for the consideration of the permits they submit. Permit income received is used to cover the costs associated with administering the permits submitted by the utility companies. The local authority is not charged for permits it submits for its own highway works, however the costs for the Streetworks team administering these permits are met from within the existing Technical Services budgets.

The permit scheme should be cost neutral to the Council. Permit revenue can only be used to cover the cost of administering utility related permits (and in the first 3 years recovering the set-up costs of the scheme). Complying with this and ensuring that the scheme is cost neutral requires careful budget management and the publishing of annual reviews at the end of each of the first three years. The scheme should then be reviewed every three years thereafter with any surplus or deficit remedied by a change in permit fees levied.

The annual reports evaluate the progress of the permit scheme in relation to the scheme objectives with a specific focus on the parity of treatment of all works for highways purposes and utility company street works. The first annual evaluation of the Northumberland County Council Street Works Permit Scheme covered the period of 3 February 2020 to 31 March 2021 and the second year from 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022.

The Covid-19 pandemic resulted in a very challenging first year of the permit scheme and continued to bring further challenges during the second year, however we have now resumed a level of business as usual. Success and improvements in the way that works and activities on the highway network have been undertaken and managed within the scheme have continued to be experienced and evidenced. The Streetworks



team continue to maintain open, positive relationships with utilities companies and internal highways colleagues alike and provide additional support when required.

The key outcomes identified in this first and second years of the permit scheme can be summarised as follows:

Category	Year 1	Year 2
No of Permit applications received	20,887	22,510
No of Permits - Granted	14,767 (70.7%)	16,624 (73.9%)
No of Permits - Refused	3,659 (17.5%)	2,313 (10.3%)
No of Permits - granted then cancelled, refused then cancelled, deemed or superseded	11.8%	5.8%
% of deemed permits	0.48%	0.23%
No of days disruption saved	604	187
No of days saved through collaborative working	259	685
Income (surplus/deficit)	-£61,374	£68,603

The permit scheme reported a surplus of £68,603 in the second year, however this results in an overall surplus of only £7,229 over the first 2 years due to the first-year deficit.

The permit scheme continues to be well run and the performance monitoring measures established provide a framework for continuous monitoring and reporting in order to improve performance.

## Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to note the contents of the report.

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## Background Papers

Year 1 and Year 2 Annual Reports – available on the Councils website at [Northumberland County Council - Roadworks, closures & diversions](#) under the section 'Streetworks Permit Scheme'

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**Northumberland**  
County Council

# **Street Works Permit Scheme**

**For Road Works and Street Works**

## **Year 1 Review**

## Document Control

### Version History

Date	Version	Comments
28/04/21	V 0.1	Draft
25/06/21	V 1.0	Final version

### Review Control

Reviewer	Section	Comments	Actions Agreed

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## 1 Executive Summary

Northumberland County Council (NCC) embarked on its journey to introduce a street works permit scheme along with the remaining nine North East highways authorities (HA) in 2019. North Tyneside Council was previously the only North East of England HA already operating a permit scheme which has now been in operation since February 2015.

The Northumberland County Council Street Works Permit Scheme Order 2020 was made on 2 January 2020 with the scheme coming into force on 3 February 2020. Northumberland was the first of the North East HAs working collaboratively on implementing schemes in 2020 to go live.

This is the first annual evaluation of the Northumberland County Council Street Works Permit Scheme and due to the timing of implementation, covers the period of 3 February 2020 to 31 March 2021.

This report evaluates the progress of the permit scheme in relation to the scheme objectives and specifically focuses on the parity of treatment of all works for highways purposes and utility (SU) street works.

This has been a challenging first year in which there has been the added difficulty of managing the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic. Despite this there have been some significant successes and improvements in the way that works and activities on the highway network have been undertaken and managed, and the scheme continues to develop.

The key outcomes identified in this first year of the permit scheme can be summarised as follows:-

- A total of 20,887 permit applications were received in the period with 14,767 (70.7%) being granted and 3,659 (17.5%) refused (the other 11.8% is made up of applications that were granted then cancelled, refused then cancelled, deemed or superseded). 7102 of the total number of applications received were variations
- Performance monitoring measures established provide a framework for continuous monitoring and reporting in order to drive performance
- 604 days of disruption to the travelling public have been saved in the review period following challenges made in relation to the duration of works initially proposed
- In relation to the number of Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) issued for permit breaches – there was a 53% reduction in Regulation 19s (working without a permit) issued in the fourth quarter of 2020/21 compared to the number issued in quarter 1
- Through the level of support provided by the Streetworks team we have demonstrated a positive commitment to ensuring fairness across all works promoters
- 259 calendar days have been saved as a direct result of encouraging collaborative working between works promoters
- Whilst the scheme is reporting a deficit in the first year of £61,374, Covid-19 had an impact on permit fees in the first quarter of 2020/21 however the number of permits has continued to increase throughout the year as works have resumed to anticipated levels

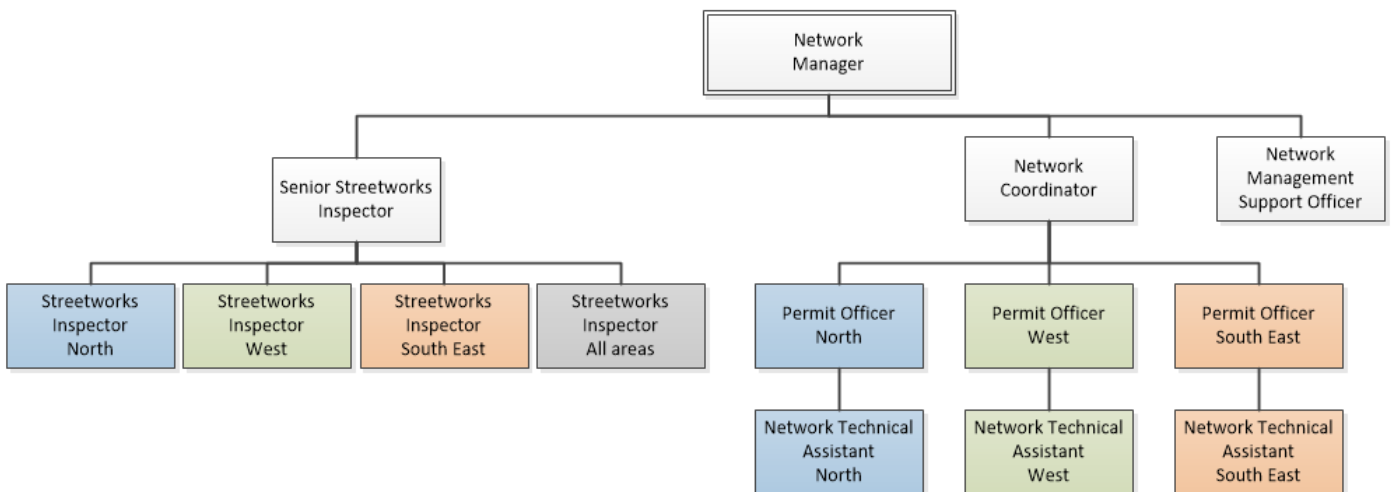
## 2 Introduction

Northumberland County Council permit scheme operates as a single scheme and was introduced to give greater control over activities taking place on the Council's highway network. The permit scheme aligns with the Council's Local Transport Plan (LTP) 2011-2026 which sets out the vision, aims and objectives for transport across the county.

The move to implement a permit scheme has enabled the Council to manage and coordinate road works more proactively than in the past via the noticing regime. This ability has brought with it responsibility to use additional powers in a way that has enabled the authority to better manage its network, minimise disruption to its users, and improve the efficiency and reliability of the transport network.

Whilst the Council did notice a significant proportion of its own works under the previous noticing regime, the permit scheme has given a real focus in ensuring parity between all works promoters. Management measures have been put in place to monitor this closely and to also support our highways colleagues in driving improvement in performance.

The business case and cost benefit analysis, undertaken prior to taking the decision to implement the scheme, identified that custom fees would be charged as opposed to full fees and that the additional personnel required for permit related activities would be 3.5 FTE – below shows the Streetworks structure at the time of implementation of the permit scheme.



Our Streetworks team prides itself in the positive working relationships that have been built over many years with works promoters. We continue to work very closely with both utilities and our highways colleagues alike to achieve the successful operation of the permit scheme.

The implementation of Street Manager in the summer of 2020 posed its own challenges. However as this is running through our Mayrise software provided by Yotta via an Application Programming Interface (API), whilst there were some initial teething problems, this now has little impact on the day to day operation of the permit scheme.

### 3 Scheme management measures

Whilst the day to day coordination of street works activity on the network falls to the Permit Officers through the processing of permits and the administering of road closures, traffic light applications, FPNs etc, there has been a continuous focus by the entire team on process improvement from the implementation of the scheme and even before. It was felt that by committing resources to educate and establish best practice with all stakeholders in the short term, we would create an efficient and more robust scheme in the longer term.

In preparation for the implementation of the scheme, we invited all Highways staff to a presentation to provide an introduction to permitting. We followed this up with more targeted work with the staff whose roles would be directly affected by the change; this work continued with weekly, fortnightly and eventually monthly meetings with the individuals responsible for creating and submitting permits.

A log was created for the Permit Officers to record any issues or anomalies identified and these were discussed and resolved in weekly review meetings to ensure a consistent approach across the team when assessing permits. These issues were also discussed with the Highways officers to highlight learning opportunities and agree best practice.

The Permit Officers undertook a resource intensive process during the first two months of the scheme to support staff from both the internal Highways service and statutory undertakers with the submission of permits. This included a stated intention to avoid refusing permits where possible and instead using modification requests. The aim of this approach was to help establish good working practices from the outset which also assisted in building a rapport between the new to post Permit Officers and the individuals submitting permits.

After the scheme had been live for one month, we conducted workshops in each of the Highways areas in order to reinforce key fundamentals and answer any questions that individuals had now that they had first-hand experience of permitting. These proved beneficial in reassuring Highways staff as well as increasing their understanding of the reasoning behind implementing the scheme.

A greater proportion of the preparation time was spent with our internal Highways department as they had no previous experience of permitting, whilst most of the SUs had some knowledge of how permit schemes operate from working with North Tyneside's permit scheme and from other areas of the country. All SUs were offered the opportunity to have regular formal meetings to review performance and discuss any issues that had arisen on either side however their preference has been to deal with individual matters as they arise and also through the quarterly Streetworks Coordination meetings. Our coordination meetings are also a forum to raise any concerns and discuss the operation of the scheme more generally. The SUs were also offered the opportunity to meet with all the NE LAs in a permit forum however following the first meeting this was discontinued due to low take up; instead it was agreed that permitting would be added as a regular agenda item at the North East Highways and Utilities Committee (NEHAUC) meetings.

Overall, we have received very positive feedback on the operation of the permit scheme and utilities have reported feeling that we are responsive to issues and seek to work collaboratively which has only served to strengthen our relationships.



Northumberland County Council was in a better starting position than many of the other NE LAs due to having previously noticed a greater percentage of its own works; therefore it was a less dramatic change to business as usual processes and we were able to focus on specific areas of concern. To this end, we have monthly performance management meetings with the managers in each of the Highways areas. Working in collaboration, we have been able to identify a number of process improvements to the current ways of working that should aid compliance and create efficiencies.

To build on this, we have worked with our software provider to modify a number of the standard KPI templates in order to improve how the relevant data is displayed. We feel this will allow a greater level of analysis and provide a more detailed understanding of how effectively we are managing our scheme. We are also part of a newly formed Mayrise User Group which has provided an invaluable opportunity to discuss any issues and share best practice across the region.

#### **4 Performance monitoring**

The overarching objective of the permit scheme can be summarised as the ability to manage and maintain the local highway network to maximise the safe and efficient use of road space and provide reliable journey times.

Prior to the implementation of permitting, the existing Streetworks team operated an effective noticing scheme to coordinate activities on the highway. Using the positive working relationships cultivated with the SUs over a long period of time, the team worked to many of the same objectives that have now been more formally outlined in the permit scheme.

Northumberland County Council had not previously pursued the option of implementing a permit scheme due to the successful operation of the noticing scheme. Despite the limited scope for initial significant changes, we still expect that the permit scheme will bring many beneficial incremental improvements over time. This report therefore looks to establish a benchmark from which the service will effectively measure future performance.

In order to appropriately monitor scheme performance, the below KPIs were selected:

1. KPI 1 (*The number of permit and permit variation applications received, granted, refused, deemed and cancelled by activity type*)
2. KPI 2 (*The number of conditions applied by condition type*)
3. KPI 3 (*The number of permit extension requests received and granted for issued permits*)
4. KPI 4 (*The number of early starts requested and granted per activity type*)
5. OM 3 (*The number of Section 74 Overruns that have occurred with a percentage of total works that have overrun*)
6. OM 4 (*Average duration of phases by works category along with a total quantity of phases that meet the criteria*)
7. OM 6 (*Number of collaborative works phases with the totals of working and calendar days of disruption saved*)
8. AM 3 (*Number of phases that have permits that were refused and then a variation was submitted with a reduced duration which was granted*)
9. AM 5 (*Number of FPNs issued for permit breaches including withdrawn FPNs*)

The specific objectives of the Northumberland County Council Street Works Permit Scheme are listed below and are evidenced through the KPI data provided within the appendices to this report;

- **Coordination** - *reduce occupation of the highway for both street and highway works in order to minimise disruption to the travelling public*

A traffic sensitivity review was carried out prior to the scheme implementation. As a review had not been undertaken since 1999 and as there had been significant changes to the road network over the 20 year period, it was therefore important for the Council to have an accurate and up to date picture of the road network asset. Stakeholder consultation took place from 18/12/19 to 15/01/20 to allow for responses to be considered prior to any permit charges being set. No public feedback was received to dispute any of the proposed changes so the revisions were made as consulted on.

KPI 1 (Appendix A) provides a detailed breakdown of the number of permit and variation applications received, granted, refused, cancelled and deemed. A total of 20,887 permit applications were received in the period with 14,767 (70.7%) being granted and 3,659 (17.5%) refused (the other 11.8% is made up of applications that were granted then cancelled, refused then cancelled, deemed or superseded); 7102 of the total number of applications received were variations.

The data demonstrates that less than 0.5% of all received permits deemed, which were predominantly variations on immediate permits. This is testament to the hard work and dedication of the Streetworks team given the capacity issues experienced during this first year. This drive to ensure every permit is assessed demonstrates the commitment to appropriately managing the network. KPI 2 (Appendix B) lists the individual conditions are applied to HA and SU permits to aid coordination and to reduce the potential for disruption caused by works which in turn contributes to meeting scheme objectives.

AM 3 (Appendix H) shows that the proactive challenge offered by the Streetworks team has saved over 600 calendar days worth of disruption to the travelling public. This coupled with the data in OM 3 (Appendix E), stating that only 2.2% of all works overran during the first year, demonstrates the level of scrutiny being applied by the team when assessing permits.

- **Compliance** - *improve compliance with the relevant codes of practice and conditions*

Compliance has always been a key focus of the Streetworks team so there were already established foundations on which to build upon. AM5 (Appendix I) shows the number of FPNs issued by the three FPN offence codes and further divided by HA and SU. A tally of granted permits has been included, also subcategorised by HA and SU, in order to provide some context to the data.

A total of 2256 FPNs (including internal shadow FPNs) were issued against a total of 14,767 granted permits – this averages out at an FPN on 15.3% of granted permits.

It should be noted that a large percentage (81% - 1829) of the total FPNs are Section 74(7b) offences (late starts and stops) and the majority of these (1485) are internal. This has been discussed at length during our monthly performance meetings with the Highways Area Managers and the root cause established; it is predominantly an administration issue caused by capacity shortages during peak periods. NCC is looking to implement new software called Alloy that will allow individuals to start and stop works directly from site which will aim to both improve the quality of live information and reduce the incurrence of Section 74(7b) shadow FPNs.

In terms of compliance with the permit scheme itself, a quarter on quarter review of the Regulation 19 (Working without a permit) FPNs shows a substantial improvement by the end of the first year. The breakdown of AM 5 (Appendix I) illustrates a 53% reduction from 60 Regulation 19 FPNs in the first quarter to 28 in the final three months of the year. It must be noted that 77.8% of the Regulation 19 FPNs are attributed to Highways internal works, predominantly caused by works taking place outside of the time periods agreed in the initial permit. Again, it is felt this is largely an administrative issue based on capacity conflicts rather than a wilful lack of compliance; however the Streetworks team will continue to support Highways to ensure that the submitted information on the permit is kept up to date when elements of the work have had to change given the dynamic nature of the service. For context, the number of Regulation 19 FPNs incurred internally still only represents 4.2% of all works carried out by the Highways delivery team.

The low percentage of Regulation 20 (breach of permit conditions) FPNs compared to the total number of granted permits (1.3%) demonstrates that there is a good level of compliance with the conditions as agreed in the permit. This also ensures that the information being shared with the public is accurate.

- **Information** - *ensure accurate information is available to the public through improved quality of information received from all works promoters*

Through the permit application process and scrutiny of permit conditions, better quality information for each works is achieved. All works contained on the Council's Streetworks register are publicly displayed through the One.network platform.

The Streetworks team made the decision to create a Section 50 (private licence) workstream in Street Manager and this has allowed Section 50 licences to be added as an "information only" permit which enables the works to be plotted on One.network. This has improved the quality of live information available to the travelling public as well as aiding ourselves and any works promoters with regard to wider coordination of works and other demands on the network.

Permit board information on site is also an added benefit of the permit scheme which provides transparency of the works promoter responsible for individual works and ease of access to contact information for the public.

- **Fairness** - *ensure all works promoters are treated fairly and with parity*

All permits received are assessed using the same process. At the point of scheme implementation, the Permit Officers offered additional support to both HA and SU staff whilst they acquainted themselves with the new procedures. This did not result

in a reduction in the quality of granted permits, instead the Permit Officers would provide extensive support and advice via email, phone calls and Permit Modification Requests (PMRs).

The sample inspection regime, as set out in the Inspections Code of Practice, allows for a Street Authority to establish the overall performance of each undertaker (including Highway Authority works and private works) operating in its area. This involves inspection of a structured random sample of works at various stages during the works and reinstatement guarantee period. To ensure that promoters are treated equally, 100% of the sample inspections generated are carried out. As well as carrying out 100% of the sample inspections generated, the Streetworks Inspection team also carries out a large number of routine inspections in order to ensure a greater level of monitoring.

KPI 3 (Appendix C) clearly demonstrates a parity of treatment when granting extension requests with a difference of 2.8% in favour of the SUs. This is switched in favour of internal works for granted early starts in KPI 4 (Appendix D) but again the percentage difference is only 10%.

However, it must be noted that the percentage of works where an early start is requested is sizeably different; the total percentage of works with early requests for all HA works is 16.9% whilst it is only 4.7% for all SU works. This difference is largely due to the volume of early start requests for Major (30.4%) and Standard (27.1%) works for the HA. This is primarily due to the unpredictable nature of some of the funding streams for HA works, therefore the Streetworks team endeavours to allow flexibility within the bounds of the scheme. This same flexibility is also afforded to SUs for example when carrying out externally funded projects with strict financial deadlines such as the broadband rollout.

Whilst there is a clear discrepancy in the percentage of works with an early start request, the percentage of granted requests shows that the team have considered each application on its merits and therefore treated all works promoters fairly and with parity.

- **Collaboration** - *encourage collaborative working between all works promoters*

Encouraging work promoters to work in a more collaborative way in order to minimise disruption to the travelling public has long been a focus of the Streetworks team. The team proactively seeks to engage with any works promoter when there is a clash for the requested road space and will help to facilitate a solution where possible. It must be acknowledged that the pandemic has made collaborating more challenging as organisations have had to implement extensive Covid-19 risk assessments to each site and allowing staff from other organisations adds further complexity.

The data from KPI OM6 (Appendix G) shows that these efforts saved more than 250 days worth of disruption on the network. We will use this figure as a benchmark as we seek to drive greater levels of collaboration as working practices begin to return to normal as social distancing requirements reduce. It is worth noting that of the five distinct periods since implementation (Feb to Mar 20 and then the four quarters of the 20/21 financial year), the final quarter had the highest number of days saved.

## 5 Financial information

It is anticipated that it will take the first 3 years of the scheme before financial stability can be achieved. The full scheme set up costs will be spread over the first 3 years of operation. There have been some unexpected challenges in this first year review period. These have mainly been due to the disruption caused to works during the first Covid-19 lockdown from 23 March 2020 through to June 2020.

In preparation for implementation of the scheme, data from the previous noticing regime was used to calculate the anticipated income levels; however this was not achieved as predicted due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. Permit income was therefore lower than predicted during the first few months of the scheme and this has resulted in an overall deficit. This said, we anticipate that given the steady increase in the number of permits received in the second half of 2020/21 that this will stabilise during the second and third year review periods. We are not proposing to make any amendments to permit fees at this stage.

	SU Costs
<b>Feb-March 2020</b>	
Staffing	61,645
Non-staffing costs	9,098
<b>2020/21</b>	
Staffing	369,871
Set up costs (per annum for 3 yrs)	46,152
Non-staffing costs	54,587
<b>Total Allowable Expenditure</b>	<b>541,354</b>
Permit Income Feb 20 - Mar 20	68,900
Permit Income Apr 20 – Mar 21	411,080
<b>Total Permit Income</b>	<b>479,980</b>
<b>Deficit</b>	<b>(61,374)</b>

## 6 Recommendations

This has been a successful first year of the permit scheme despite the added challenges brought by the Covid-19 pandemic. Clearly the scheme will continue to evolve and there will be a continuous drive to making improvements to how the network is managed. In making an assessment of the first year, and looking ahead to Year 2, there are a number of key considerations and areas for improvement that have been identified:-

- increase from three to four dedicated operational areas:-
  - it is proposed that the fourth Streetworks Inspector will be responsible for a dedicated area as opposed to covering all three existing areas
  - it is proposed to recruit 1 x Permit Officer and 1 x Network Technical Assistant. A cautious approach was taken to recruitment at the time of implementation therefore this proposed increase in staffing will have no financial impact on permit fees during Year 2.

- the proposed new structure is illustrated at Appendix J
- ensure the level of deemed permits remains below 0.5% of all received permits
- carry out a review of how the permit conditions are being applied to ensure that they continue to be applied in line with the guidance
- seek to continually improve Permit Officer knowledge of the network through increased involvement in site inspections and visits
- continued development of performance monitoring through monthly meetings and continuous open dialogue
- maintaining good levels of collaboration and information sharing across the North East LAs

## 9 Appendices

### Appendix A

#### KPI 1

The number of permit and permit variation applications received, granted, refused, deemed and cancelled by activity type

Feb 20 - Mar 21

Works categories	Applications received				Applications granted				Applications granted then cancelled				Applications refused			
	No (HA)	Work cat break down (%)	No (SU)	Work cat break down (%)	No (HA)	% of total apps	No (SU)	% of total apps	No (HA)	% of total apps	No (SU)	% of total apps	No (HA)	% of total apps	No (SU)	% of total apps
Major (>10 w/d)	676	16.4%	763	7.9%	544	80.5%	500	65.5%	81	12.0%	67	8.8%	114	16.9%	120	15.7%
Standard	724	17.6%	2021	20.9%	518	71.5%	1090	53.9%	42	5.8%	250	12.4%	78	10.8%	391	19.3%
Minor	2396	58.2%	3723	38.5%	1761	73.5%	2143	57.6%	92	3.8%	327	8.8%	324	13.5%	916	24.6%
Immediate - Urgent	74	1.8%	2668	27.6%	58	78.4%	2492	93.4%	3	4.1%	39	1.5%	7	9.5%	14	0.5%
Immediate - Emergency	250	6.1%	490	5.1%	238	95.2%	437	89.2%	2	0.8%	8	1.6%	6	2.4%	4	0.8%
Total	4120	100.0%	9665	100.0%	3119	75.7%	6662	68.9%	220	5.3%	691	7.1%	529	12.8%	1445	15.0%

Works categories	Applications refused then cancelled				Applications deemed				Applications superceded			
	No (HA)	% of total apps	No (SU)	% of total apps	No (HA)	% of total apps	No (SU)	% of total apps	No (HA)	% of total apps	No (SU)	% of total apps
Major (>10 w/d)	19	2.8%	65	8.5%	3	0.4%	3	0.4%	15	2.2%	140	18.3%
Standard	18	2.5%	226	11.2%	1	0.1%	5	0.2%	127	17.5%	535	26.5%

Minor	60	2.5%	496	13.3%	5	0.2%	8	0.2%	306	12.8%	656	17.6%
Immediate - Urgent	1	1.4%	2	0.1%	0	0.0%	5	0.2%	9	12.2%	157	5.9%
Immediate - Emergency	2	0.8%	1	0.2%	0	0.0%	1	0.2%	6	2.4%	48	9.8%
Total	100	2.4%	790	8.2%	9	0.2%	22	0.2%	463	11.2%	1536	15.9%

Works categories	Variations received				Variations granted				Variations granted & cancelled				Variations refused			
	No (HA)	Work cat break down (%)	No (SU)	Work cat break down (%)	No (HA)	% of total apps	No (SU)	% of total apps	No (HA)	% of total apps	No (SU)	% of total apps	No (HA)	% of total apps	No (SU)	% of total apps
Major (>10 w/d)	208	12.8%	617	11.3%	138	66.3%	420	68.1%	7	3.4%	19	3.1%	62	29.8%	151	24.5%
Standard	511	31.4%	1458	26.6%	390	76.3%	946	64.9%	20	3.9%	134	9.2%	88	17.2%	409	28.1%
Minor	882	54.3%	2300	42.0%	651	73.8%	1575	68.5%	39	4.4%	233	10.1%	179	20.3%	624	27.1%
Immediate - Urgent	3	0.2%	791	14.4%	2	66.7%	642	81.2%	0	0.0%	7	0.9%	1	33.3%	83	10.5%
Immediate - Emergency	21	1.3%	311	5.7%	18	85.7%	204	65.6%	0	0.0%	1	0.3%	3	14.3%	85	27.3%
Total	1625	100.0%	5477	100.0%	1199	73.8%	3787	69.1%	66	4.1%	394	7.2%	333	20.5%	1352	24.7%

Works categories	Variations refused & cancelled				Variations deemed				Variations superceded			
	No (HA)	% of total apps	No (SU)	% of total apps	No (HA)	% of total apps	No (SU)	% of total apps	No (HA)	% of total apps	No (SU)	% of total apps
Major (>10 w/d)	21	10.1%	36	5.8%	0	0.0%	4	0.6%	8	3.8%	23	3.7%
Standard	12	2.3%	195	13.4%	3	0.6%	11	0.8%	30	5.9%	92	6.3%
Minor	49	5.6%	311	13.5%	4	0.5%	10	0.4%	48	5.4%	91	4.0%
Immediate - Urgent	0	0.0%	7	0.9%	0	0.0%	26	3.3%	0	0.0%	40	5.1%
Immediate - Emergency	1	4.8%	1	0.3%	0	0.0%	8	2.6%	0	0.0%	14	4.5%
Total	83	5.1%	550	10.0%	7	0.4%	59	1.1%	86	5.3%	260	4.7%



## Appendix B

### KPI 2

The number of conditions applied by condition type

Feb 20 - Mar 21

<b>Total no. of permit conditions</b>	41228
<b>Total no. of HA permit conditions</b>	14430
<b>Total no. of SU permit conditions</b>	26798

NCT Ref	Condition description	HA	%	SU	%	Total	%
NCT 01a	Date constraints	12	0.1%	1305	4.9%	1317	3.2%
NCT 02a	Limit the days and times of day	1749	12.1%	3008	11.2%	4757	11.5%
NCT 02b	Working hours	1103	7.6%	414	1.5%	1517	3.7%
NCT 04b	Material & plant storage	1	0.0%	26	0.1%	27	0.1%
NCT 05a	Width and/or length of road space that can be occupied	0	0.0%	113	0.4%	113	0.3%
NCT 06a	Traffic space dimensions	4	0.0%	100	0.4%	104	0.3%
NCT 07a	Road closed to traffic	527	3.7%	463	1.7%	990	2.4%
NCT 08b	Light signals & shuttle working	661	4.6%	614	2.3%	1275	3.1%
NCT 09a	Changes to traffic management arrangements	126	0.9%	182	0.7%	308	0.7%
NCT 10a	Work methodology	1	0.0%	42	0.2%	43	0.1%
NCT 11b	Publicity for proposed works	692	4.8%	2003	7.5%	2695	6.5%
NCT 12a	Environmental	1	0.0%	3	0.0%	4	0.0%
NCT 13	Local	0	0.0%	3	0.0%	3	0.0%
NCT 01a	Duration on streets where the validity window does not apply	2333	16.2%	5024	18.7%	7357	17.8%
NCT 01b	Duration on streets where the validity window applies	2624	18.2%	5315	19.8%	7939	19.3%
NCT 04a	Removal of surplus materials/plant	0	0.0%	2	0.0%	2	0.0%
NCT 04b	Storage of surplus materials/plant	0	0.0%	7	0.0%	7	0.0%
NCT 06a	Road space to be available to traffic/pedestrians at certain times of the day	1	0.0%	59	0.2%	60	0.1%
NCT 08a	Traffic management request	1514	10.5%	1323	4.9%	2837	6.9%

NCT 08b	Manual control of traffic management	143	1.0%	391	1.5%	534	1.3%
NCT 09b	Traffic management arrangements to be in place	15	0.1%	23	0.1%	38	0.1%
NCT 09c	Signal removal from operation when no longer required	587	4.1%	1047	3.9%	1634	4.0%
NCT 10a	Employment of appropriate methodology	2	0.0%	16	0.1%	18	0.0%
NCT 11a	Display of permit number	2333	16.2%	5315	19.8%	7648	18.6%
NCT 12a	Limit timing of certain activities	1	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	0.0%

**Appendix C**

**KPI 3**

The number of permit extension requests received and granted for issued permits

**Feb 20 - Mar 21**

	<b>HA</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>SU</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>%</b>
Total applications	3530	N/A	9025	N/A	12555	N/A
Extension requests	320	9.1%	675	7.5%	995	7.9%
Requests approved	295	92.2%	641	95.0%	936	94.1%

**Appendix D**

**KPI 4**

The number of early starts requested and granted per activity type

Feb 20 - Mar 21

Activity type	Granted permits by work cat break down (HA)	Early start requests (HA)	% of early start requests (HA)	Early starts granted (HA)	% of granted requests (HA)	Granted permits by work cat break down (SU)	Early start request (SU)	% of early start requests (SU)	Early starts granted (SU)	% of granted requests (SU)	Total no of early start requests	Total no of early starts granted	Total % of granted requests
Major	884	269	30.4%	162	60.2%	1380	189	13.7%	152	80.4%	458	314	68.6%
Standard	1235	335	27.1%	265	79.1%	3479	146	4.2%	83	56.8%	481	348	72.3%
Minor	3278	306	9.3%	221	72.2%	6023	173	2.9%	76	43.9%	479	297	62.0%
Total	5397	910	16.9%	648	71.2%	10882	508	4.7%	311	61.2%	1418	959	67.6%

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**Appendix E**

**OM3**

The number of Section 74 Overruns that have occurred with a percentage of total works that have overrun

**Feb 20 - Mar 21**

	<b>HA</b>	<b>SU</b>
Number of works	3052	7666
Number of works with an overrun	62	178
Percentage of works with an overrun (%)	2.03%	2.32%

## Appendix F

### OM4

Average duration of phases by works category along with a total quantity of phases that meet the criteria

Feb 20 - Mar 21

Activity type	Average duration (HA)	Total number of phases (HA)	Average duration (SU)	Total number of phases (SU)
Major	8.26	401	10.70	577
Standard	6.41	478	5.30	1251
Minor	1.75	1726	1.61	2659
Immediate (Urgent)	1.65	54	3.76	2624
Immediate (Emergency)	3.25	231	4.48	484

## Appendix G

### OM6

Number of collaborative works phases with the totals of working and calendar days of disruption saved

#### Feb 20 - Mar 21

Activity type	HA	SU	Total
Collaborative phases	5	40	45
Working days saved	11	194	205
Calendar days saved	11	248	259

#### Feb 20 - Mar 20

Activity type	HA	SU	Total
Collaborative phases	0	4	4
Working days saved	0	16	16
Calendar days saved	0	20	20

#### Quarter 1

Activity type	HA	SU	Total
Collaborative phases	0	9	9
Working days saved	0	53	53
Calendar days saved	0	69	69

**Quarter 2**

Activity type	HA	SU	Total
Collaborative phases	0	5	5
Working days saved	0	43	43
Calendar days saved	0	57	57

**Quarter 3**

Activity type	HA	SU	Total
Collaborative phases	0	12	12
Working days saved	0	35	35
Calendar days saved	0	43	43

**Quarter 4**

Activity type	HA	SU	Total
Collaborative phases	5	10	15
Working days saved	11	47	58
Calendar days saved	11	59	70



**Appendix H**

**AM3**

Number of phases that have permits that were refused and then a variation was submitted with a reduced duration which was granted

**Feb 20 - Mar 21**

<b>Activity type</b>	<b>HA</b>	<b>SU</b>	<b>Total</b>
Phase total	26	87	113
Working days saved	54	389	443
Calendar days saved	73	531	604

**Appendix I**

**AM5**

Number of FPNs issued for permit breaches including withdrawn FPNs

**Feb 20 - Mar 21**

	HA	SU	Total
<b>Number of granted permits</b>	4318	10449	14767
<b>% of the total no of works in the county</b>	<b>29.24%</b>	70.76%	100.00%

Page 6 of 10 FPN type	HA			SU			Total
	No of FPNs	% of total FPNs issued	Break down by FPN code	No of FPNs	% of total FPNs issued	Break down by FPN code	No of FPNs
74 (Starts/Stops)	1485	81.2%	85.7%	344	18.8%	65.6%	1829
19 (Without a permit)	182	77.8%	10.5%	52	22.2%	9.9%	234
20 (Permit breaches)	65	33.7%	3.8%	128	66.3%	24.4%	193
<b>Total</b>	<b>1732</b>	<b>76.8%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>524</b>	<b>23.2%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>2256</b>

**Feb 20 - Mar 20**

	HA	SU	Total
<b>Number of granted permits</b>	372	1358	1730
<b>% of the total no of works in the county</b>	<b>21.50%</b>	78.50%	100.00%

FPN type	HA			SU			Total
	No of FPNs	% of total FPNs issued	Break down by FPN code	No of FPNs	% of total FPNs issued	Break down by FPN code	No of FPNs
74 (Starts/Stops)	106	88.3%	74.6%	14	11.7%	31.8%	120
19 (Without a permit)	35	70.0%	24.6%	15	30.0%	34.1%	50
20 (Permit breaches)	1	6.3%	0.7%	15	93.8%	34.1%	16
Total	142	76.3%	100.0%	44	23.7%	100.0%	186

Quarter 1

	HA	SU	Total
Number of granted permits	814	1834	2648
% of the total no of works in the county	30.74%	69.26%	100.00%

FPN type	HA			SU			Total
	No of FPNs	% of total FPNs issued	Break down by FPN code	No of FPNs	% of total FPNs issued	Break down by FPN code	No of FPNs
74 (Starts/Stops)	262	92.9%	81.9%	20	7.1%	45.5%	282
19 (Without a permit)	53	88.3%	16.6%	7	11.7%	15.9%	60
20 (Permit breaches)	5	22.7%	1.6%	17	77.3%	38.6%	22
Total	320	87.9%	100.0%	44	12.1%	100.0%	364

Quarter 2

	HA	SU	Total
Number of granted permits	1069	2140	3209
% of the total no of works in the county	33.31%	66.69%	100.00%

FPN type	HA			SU			Total
	No of FPNs	% of total FPNs issued	Break down by FPN code	No of FPNs	% of total FPNs issued	Break down by FPN code	No of FPNs
74 (Starts/Stops)	379	75.3%	88.1%	124	24.7%	77.5%	503
19 (Without a permit)	43	81.1%	10.0%	10	18.9%	6.3%	53
20 (Permit breaches)	8	23.5%	1.9%	26	76.5%	16.3%	34
Total	430	72.9%	100.0%	160	27.1%	100.0%	590

Quarter 3

	HA	SU	Total
Number of granted permits	900	2255	3155
% of the total no of works in the county	28.53%	71.47%	100.00%

FPN type	HA			SU			Total
	No of FPNs	% of total FPNs issued	Break down by FPN code	No of FPNs	% of total FPNs issued	Break down by FPN code	No of FPNs
74 (Starts/Stops)	430	79.0%	91.5%	114	21.0%	67.9%	544
19 (Without a permit)	28	65.1%	6.0%	15	34.9%	8.9%	43

20 (Permit breaches)	12	23.5%	2.6%	39	76.5%	23.2%	51
Total	470	73.7%	100.0%	168	26.3%	100.0%	638

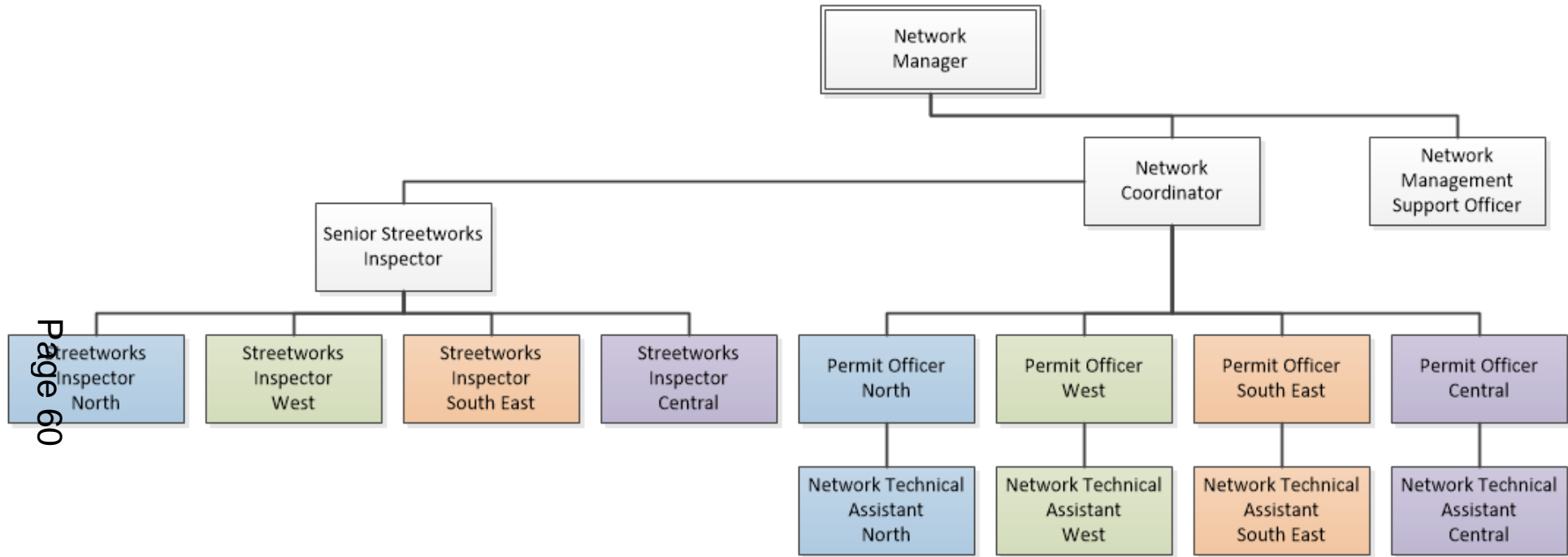
**Quarter 4**

	HA	SU	Total
Number of granted permits	1163	2862	4025
% of the total no of works in the county	28.89%	71.11%	100.00%

FPN type	HA			SU			Total
	No of FPNs	% of total FPNs issued	Break down by FPN code	No of FPNs	% of total FPNs issued	Break down by FPN code	No of FPNs
74 (Starts/Stops)	308	81.1%	83.2%	72	18.9%	66.7%	380
19 (Without a permit)	23	82.1%	6.2%	5	17.9%	4.6%	28
20 (Permit breaches)	39	55.7%	10.5%	31	44.3%	28.7%	70
Total	370	77.4%	100.0%	108	22.6%	100.0%	478

**Appendix J**

**Proposed Streetworks staffing structure**



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**Northumberland**  
County Council

# **Street Works Permit Scheme**

**For Road Works and Street Works**

## **Year 2 Review**



**Northumberland**  
County Council

## Document Control

### Version History

Date	Version	Comments
11/11/22	V 0.1	Draft
07/12/22	V 1.0	Final version

### Review Control

Reviewer	Section	Comments	Actions Agreed



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## 1 Executive Summary

The Northumberland County Council Street Works Permit Scheme Order 2020 was made on 2 January 2020 with the scheme coming into force on 3 February 2020.

Due to the timing of the scheme implementation, the first year review covered a fourteen month period. This is the second annual evaluation of the Northumberland County Council Street Works Permit Scheme which covers the period of 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022.

This report evaluates the progress of the permit scheme in relation to the scheme objectives and on the recommendations made in the Year 1 review. For the purposes of comparison when referring to Year 1 this related to the period from 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021 only.

The Covid-19 pandemic has continued to bring some challenges during Year 2 of the scheme however it is hoped that on reaching the end of Year 2, we have resumed a level of business as usual. We have continued to see some successes and improvements in the way that works and activities on the highway network have been undertaken and managed within the scheme.

The key outcomes identified in this second year of the permit scheme can be summarised as follows:-

- A total of 22,510 permit applications were received in the period with 16,624 (73.9%) being granted and 2,313 (10.3%) refused (the other 5.8% is made up of applications that were granted then cancelled, refused then cancelled, deemed or superseded). 7,108 of the total number of applications received were variations
- Performance monitoring measures established provide a framework for continuous monitoring and reporting in order to drive performance.
- 187 days of disruption to the travelling public have been saved in the review period following challenges made in relation to the duration of works initially proposed
- In relation to the number of Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) issued for permit breaches – there was an increase of 1.12% issued 2021/22 compared to the previous year.
- Only 0.23% of all received permits have deemed which may be a reflection of the additional resources through increasing from 3 to 4 area teams.
- Through the level of support provided by the Streetworks team we have demonstrated a positive commitment to ensuring fairness across all works promoters.
- 685 calendar days have been saved as a direct result of encouraging collaborative working between works promoters compared to 239 days in Year 1
- The permit scheme is reporting a surplus this year of £68,603, however this results in an overall surplus of £7,229 over the first 2 years.

## 2 Introduction

The Northumberland County Council permit scheme operates as a single scheme and was introduced to give greater control over road and street works activities taking place on the Council's highway network. The permit scheme aligns with the Council's Local Transport Plan (LTP) 2011-2026 which sets out the vision, aims and objectives for transport across the county. This has since superseded by the North East Transport Plan.

The move to implement a permit scheme has enabled the Council to manage and coordinate road works more proactively than in the past via the former noticing regime. This ability has brought with it responsibility to use additional powers in a way that has enabled the authority to better manage its network, minimise disruption to its users, and improve the efficiency and reliability of the transport network.

Our Streetworks team prides itself in the positive working relationships that have been built over many years with works promoters. We continue to work very closely with both utilities and our highways colleagues alike to achieve the successful operation of the permit scheme.

## 3 Progress against Year 1 recommendations

Below are the six recommendations made in the Year 1 review including the progress made to date;-

- **increase from three to four dedicated operational areas**  
A fourth Streetworks Inspector, Permit Officer and Network Technical Assistant were recruited to the team which is now operating with Central, North, South East and West area teams. The additional capacity has benefitted the effectiveness and efficiency of the permit schemes operation.
- **ensure the level of deemed permits remains below 0.5% of all received permits**  
0.23% of all received permits have deemed.
- **carry out a review of how the permit conditions are being applied to ensure that they continue to be applied in line with the guidance**  
Throughout this year the Network Coordinator, Network Management Support Officer and Permit Officers have met on a regular basis to discuss permit related developments to ensure consistency across all areas, with processing permits. These meetings will continue as we seek to ensure best practice.
- **seek to continually improve Permit Officer knowledge of the network through increased involvement in site inspections and visits**  
Permit Officers are encouraged to attend site meetings where appropriate and more specifically in relation to major works but also for routine and sample inspections to build their knowledge.
- **continued development of performance monitoring through monthly meetings and continuous open dialogue**  
A suite of reports have been developed with our software supplier, Yotta (Mayrise), in order to for us to access more relevant data in relation to the monitoring of our permit scheme. These reports have allowed us to break down information to a more detailed level, allowing greater analysis of performance across all SUs.

- **maintaining good levels of collaboration and information sharing across the North East LAs**

We have continued to collaborate with other LAs through the Mayrise User Group sharing best practice and discussing any relevant and common issues. Whilst this group originated to discuss software issues, it has since become a wider support group focusing on scheme delivery. We also continue to be active members of NEHAUC and NEJAG and frequently have informal discussions with neighbouring LAs.

#### 4 Performance monitoring

The overarching objective of the permit scheme can be summarised as the ability to manage and maintain the local highway network to maximise the safe and efficient use of road space and provide reliable journey times.

In order to appropriately monitor scheme performance, the below KPIs have been set and are monitored through the year.

1. KPI 1 (*The number of permit and permit variation applications received, granted, refused, deemed and cancelled by activity type*)
2. KPI 2 (*The number of conditions applied by condition type*)
3. KPI 3 (*The number of permit extension requests received and granted for issued permits*)
4. KPI 4 (*The number of early starts requested and granted per activity type*)
5. OM 3 (*The number of Section 74 Overruns that have occurred with a percentage of total works that have overrun*)
6. OM 4 (*Average duration of phases by works category along with a total quantity of phases that meet the criteria*)
7. OM 6 (*Number of collaborative works phases with the totals of working and calendar days of disruption saved*)
8. AM 3 (*Number of phases that have permits that were refused and then a variation was submitted with a reduced duration which was granted*)
9. AM 5 (*Number of FPNs issued for permit breaches including withdrawn FPNs*)

The specific objectives of the Northumberland County Council Street Works Permit Scheme are listed below and are evidenced through the KPI data provided within the appendices to this report;

- **Coordination** - *reduce occupation of the highway for both street and highway works in order to minimise disruption to the travelling public*

KPI 1 (Appendix A) provides a detailed breakdown of the number of permit and variation applications received, granted, refused, cancelled and deemed. A total of 22,510 permit applications were received in the period with 16,624 (73.9%) being granted and 2,313 (10.3%) refused (the other 5.8% is made up of applications that were granted then cancelled, refused then cancelled, deemed or superseded); 7,108 of the total number of applications received were variations.

The data demonstrates that less than 0.23% of all received permits deemed, which were predominantly variations on immediate permits. This low number is

testament to the continued hard work and dedication of the Streetworks team. Their drive to ensure every permit is assessed demonstrates the commitment to appropriately managing the network. KPI 2 (Appendix B) lists the individual conditions are applied to HA and SU permits to aid coordination and to reduce the potential for disruption caused by works which in turn contributes to meeting scheme objectives.

AM 3 (Appendix H) shows that the proactive challenge offered by the Streetworks team has saved over 187 calendar days' worth of disruption to the travelling public. Whilst this is significantly lower than Year 1 (604 days), this is a result of the work that the team have carried out initially with works promoters to more accurately calculate works durations in the first instance. At the request of the Network Coordinator, works promoters submitted a list of average durations for different works processes as guidance, to help in understanding the most appropriate timescales, which was then agreed with the Network Coordinator.

Whilst the data in OM 3 (Appendix E) states that over running works during the second year has increased for SU works (from 0.41% to 1.15%), there has been a significant decrease for HA works from 3.91% to 1.37%.

- **Compliance** - *improve compliance with the relevant codes of practice and conditions*

AM5 (Appendix I) shows the number of FPNs issued by the three FPN offence codes and further divided by HA and SU. A tally of granted permits has been included, also subcategorised by HA and SU, in order to provide some context to the data.

A total of 2,415 FPNs (including internal shadow FPNs) were issued against a total of 16,624 granted permits – this averages out at an FPN on 14.5% of granted permits. It should be noted that a large percentage (82.4% - 1,990) of the total FPNs are Section 74(7b) offences (late starts and stops) and the majority of these (1456) are internal works. This continues to be raised at performance meetings with the NCC Highways Area Managers and the root cause established; it is predominantly an administration issue caused by resource shortages during peak periods. NCC is looking to implement new software called Alloy that will allow their staff to start and stop works directly from site which will aim to both improve the quality of live information and reduce the incurrence of Section 74(7b) shadow FPNs.

The breakdown of AM 5 (Appendix I) shows an increase in both the volume of permits received and FPNs issued to SUs compared to Year 1. In Year 1 5.28% of all works attracted an FPN as opposed to 6.4% of all works in Year 2.

The Streetworks team have responded to this increase by identifying the organisations responsible and implemented a range of measures to help mitigate further increases. These measures included monthly meetings to raise key issues and discuss timely forward planning in order to try and pre-empt any unforeseen challenges. These meetings, led by the Network Coordinator and Senior Streetworks Inspector, have also strengthened working relationships. One of the aims of creating a Senior Streetworks Inspector was to provide greater capacity to

allow tighter monitoring of major schemes across the county given that these schemes often cause increased disruption to the travelling public.

- **Information** - *ensure accurate information is available to the public through improved quality of information received from all works promoters*

Through the permit application process and scrutiny of permit conditions, better quality information for each works is achieved. All works contained on the Council's Streetworks register are publicly displayed through the one.network platform.

- **Fairness** - *ensure all works promoters are treated fairly and with parity*

All permits received are assessed using the same process. The Permit Officers continue to offer additional support and advice to both HA and SU staff via email, phone calls and Permit Modification Requests (PMRs).

The sample inspection regime, as set out in the Inspections Code of Practice, allows for a Street Authority to establish the overall performance of each undertaker (including Highway Authority works and private works) operating in its area. This involves inspection of a structured random sample of works at various stages during the works and reinstatement guarantee period. To ensure that promoters are treated equally, 100% of the sample inspections generated are carried out. As well as carrying out 100% of the sample inspections generated, the Streetworks Inspection team also carries out a large number of routine inspections in order to ensure a greater level of monitoring.

KPI 3 (Appendix C) clearly demonstrates a parity of treatment when granting extension requests and remains consistent with Year 1 figures.

However, it must be noted that the percentage of works where an early start is requested is sizeably different; the total percentage of works with early requests for all HA works is 22.8% whilst it is only 9.7% for all SU works. Whilst in the first year early start requests were mainly for Major and Standard HA works, this is now more evenly spread across activity types. Whilst the proportion of works with an early start request is significantly higher for HA works the percentage of granted requests is much higher for SUs (46% for HAs and 78.9% for SUs). The figures therefore show that the team have considered each application on its merits and therefore treated all works promoters fairly and with parity.

- **Collaboration** - *encourage collaborative working between all works promoters*

Encouraging work promoters to work in a more collaborative way in order to minimise disruption to the travelling public has long been a focus of the Streetworks team. The team proactively seeks to engage with any works promoter when there is a clash for the requested road space and will help to facilitate a solution where possible.

The data from KPI OM6 (Appendix G) shows that these efforts saved 685 days worth of disruption on the network in comparison to only 239 days in Year 1.

## 5 Financial information

It is anticipated that it will take the first 3 years of the scheme before financial stability can be achieved. The full scheme set up costs have been spread over the first 3 years of operation.

In preparation for implementation of the scheme, data from the previous noticing regime was used to calculate the anticipated income levels from permit fees. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the first year of the scheme operated at an overall deficit compared to the income levels that were predicted. It was expected that this would stabilise during the second and third years. Whilst the second year has shown a surplus of £68,603, this results in an overall surplus of £7,229 over the first 2 years. It should be noted that there has been a significant increase in the number of permits issued by communications organisations during the second year. Whilst broadband activity continues to increase, we expect that this will reduce as Project Gigabit draws to a conclusion and therefore cannot be assumed as the norm for the purposes of setting permit fees.

<b>2021/22</b>	
Staffing	467,924
Set up costs (per annum for 3 yrs)	46,152
Non-staffing costs	77,992
<b>Total Allowable Expenditure</b>	<b>592,068</b>
Permit Income Apr21-Mar22	660,672
<b>Total Permit Income</b>	<b>660,672</b>
<b>2021/22 Surplus</b>	<b>68,603</b>
Deficit brought forward from 2020/21	-61,374
<b>Surplus as at end of Year 2</b>	<b>7,229</b>

## 6 Recommendations

As mentioned in Section 3 there were six recommendations made in Year 1, two of which were achieved. The remaining four are now part of business as usual. We are recommending that the level of deemed permits is retained as an annual recommendation given the importance for continuous monitoring.

During this second year we have faced a number of key challenges that have ultimately driven the recommendations made in this Year 2 report. The recommendations are as follows;-

- Ensure the level of deemed permits remains below 0.5% of all received permits
- Seek to improve data analysis and recording in order to provide meaningful year on year comparisons showing direction of travel
- Produce additional guidance materials for all undertakers to increase knowledge and understating of the scheme requirements

## 9 Appendices

### Appendix A

#### KPI 1

The number of permit and permit variation applications received, granted, refused, deemed and cancelled by activity type

Apr 21- Mar 22

Works categories	Applications received				Applications granted				Applications granted & cancelled				Applications refused			
	No (HA)	Work cat break down (%)	No (SU)	Work cat break down (%)	No (HA)	% of total apps	No (SU)	% of total apps	No (HA)	% of total apps	No (SU)	% of total apps	No (HA)	% of total apps	No (SU)	% of total apps
Major (>10 w/d)	616	16.5%	1462	12.5%	535	86.9%	1038	71.0%	71	11.5%	129	8.8%	38	6.2%	154	10.5%
Standard	567	15.2%	2557	21.9%	389	68.6%	1506	58.9%	17	3.0%	290	11.3%	37	6.5%	225	8.8%
Minor	2273	60.9%	4686	40.2%	1747	76.9%	2941	62.8%	98	4.3%	424	9.0%	84	3.7%	374	8.0%
Immediate - Urgent	62	1.7%	2549	21.8%	56	90.3%	2300	90.2%	1	1.6%	44	1.7%	2	3.2%	18	0.7%
Immediate - Emer	214	5.7%	416	3.6%	188	87.9%	370	88.9%	6	2.8%	1	0.2%	6	2.8%	6	1.4%
Total	3732	100.0%	11670	100.0%	2915	78.1%	8155	69.9%	193	5.2%	888	7.6%	167	4.5%	777	6.7%

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Applications refused & cancelled				Applications deemed				Applications superceded			
No (HA)	% of total apps	No (SU)	% of total apps	No (HA)	% of total apps	No (SU)	% of total apps	No (HA)	% of total apps	No (SU)	% of total apps
18	2.9%	109	7.5%	0	0.0%	1	0.1%	43	7.0%	269	18.4%
14	2.5%	189	7.4%	0	0.0%	1	0.0%	141	24.9%	825	32.3%
47	2.1%	314	6.7%	0	0.0%	7	0.1%	442	19.4%	1364	29.1%



1	1.6%	15	0.6%	0	0.0%	2	0.1%	4	6.5%	229	9.0%
1	0.5%	4	1.0%	0	0.0%	1	0.2%	20	9.3%	39	9.4%
81	2.2%	631	5.4%	0	0.0%	12	0.1%	650	17.4%	2726	23.4%

Works categories	Variations received				Variations granted				Variations granted & cancelled				Variations refused			
	No (HA)	Work cat break down (%)	No (SU)	Work cat break down (%)	No (HA)	% of total apps	No (SU)	% of total apps	No (HA)	% of total apps	No (SU)	% of total apps	No (HA)	% of total apps	No (SU)	% of total apps
Major (>10 w/d)	222	16.9%	1148	19.8%	190	85.6%	828	72.1%	0	0.0%	59	5.1%	28	12.6%	299	26.0%
Standard	404	30.7%	1485	25.6%	353	87.4%	1066	71.8%	12	3.0%	100	6.7%	39	9.7%	373	25.1%
Minor	655	49.8%	2356	40.7%	546	83.4%	1831	77.7%	19	2.9%	251	10.7%	89	13.6%	478	20.3%
Immediate - Urgent	8	0.6%	638	11.0%	8	100.0%	569	89.2%	0	0.0%	1	0.2%	0	0.0%	44	6.9%
Immediate - Emer	26	2.0%	166	2.9%	23	88.5%	140	84.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	7.7%	17	10.2%
Total	1315	100.0%	5793	100.0%	1120	85.2%	4434	76.5%	31	2.4%	411	7.1%	158	12.0%	1211	20.9%

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Variations refused & cancelled				Variations deemed				Variations superceded			
No (HA)	% of total apps	No (SU)	% of total apps	No (HA)	% of total apps	No (SU)	% of total apps	No (HA)	% of total apps	No (SU)	% of total apps
11	5.0%	137	11.9%	1	0.5%	1	0.1%	3	1.4%	20	1.7%
16	4.0%	260	17.5%	0	0.0%	2	0.1%	12	3.0%	44	3.0%
49	7.5%	367	15.6%	0	0.0%	4	0.2%	20	3.1%	43	1.8%
0	0.0%	1	0.2%	0	0.0%	22	3.4%	0	0.0%	3	0.5%
0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	3.8%	8	4.8%	0	0.0%	1	0.6%
76	5.8%	765	13.2%	2	0.2%	37	0.6%	35	2.7%	111	1.9%

## Appendix B

### KPI 2

The number of conditions applied by condition type

Apr 21 - March 22

<b>Total no. of permit conditions</b>	53928
<b>Total no. of HA permit conditions</b>	14972
<b>Total no. of SU permit conditions</b>	38956

NCT Ref	Condition description	HA	%	SU	%	Total	%
NCT 02a	Limit the days and times of day	1591	10.6%	4335	11.1%	5926	11.0%
NCT 02b	Working hours	127	0.8%	771	2.0%	898	1.7%
NCT 05a	Width and/or length of road space that can be occupied	0	0.0%	13	0.0%	13	0.0%
NCT 07a	Road closed to traffic	420	2.8%	478	1.2%	898	1.7%
NCT 09a	Changes to traffic management arrangements	9	0.1%	27	0.1%	36	0.1%
NCT 11b	Publicity for proposed works	574	3.8%	1842	4.7%	2416	4.5%
NCT 01a	Duration on streets where the validity window does not apply	3042	20.3%	9165	23.5%	12207	22.6%
NCT 01b	Duration on streets where the validity window applies	3042	20.3%	9165	23.5%	12207	22.6%
NCT 04a	Removal of surplus materials/plant	1	0.0%	5	0.0%	6	0.0%
NCT 04b	Storage of surplus materials/plant	0	0.0%	4	0.0%	4	0.0%
NCT 06a	Road space to be available to traffic/pedestrians at certain times of the day	0	0.0%	29	0.1%	29	0.1%
NCT 08a	Traffic management request	2037	13.6%	1801	4.6%	3838	7.1%
NCT 08b	Manual control of traffic management	150	1.0%	554	1.4%	704	1.3%
NCT 09b	Traffic management arrangements to be in place	32	0.2%	41	0.1%	73	0.1%
NCT 09c	Signal removal from operation when no longer required	902	6.0%	1470	3.8%	2372	4.4%
NCT 10a	Employment of appropriate methodology	0	0.0%	89	0.2%	89	0.2%
NCT 11a	Display of permit number	3042	20.3%	9165	23.5%	12207	22.6%
NCT 12a	Limit timing of certain activities	3	0.0%	2	0.0%	5	0.0%

**Appendix C**

**KPI 3**

The number of permit extension requests received and granted for issued permits

**Apr 21 - March 22**

	<b>HA</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>SU</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>%</b>
Total applications	3990	N/A	12502	N/A	16492	N/A
Extension requests	284	7.1%	1003	8.0%	1287	7.8%
Requests approved	284	100.0%	1003	100.0%	1287	100.0%

**Appendix D**

**KPI 4**

The number of early starts requested and granted per activity type

Apr 21 - Mar 22

Activity type	Granted permits by work cat break down (HA)	Early start requests (HA)	% of early start requests (HA)	Early starts granted (HA)	% of granted requests (HA)	Granted permits by work cat break down (SU)	Early start request (SU)	% of early start requests (SU)	Early starts granted (SU)	% of granted requests (SU)	Total no of early start requests	Total no of early starts granted	Total % of granted requests
Major	725	187	25.8%	145	77.5%	1866	268	14.4%	233	86.9%	455	378	83.1%
Standard	742	175	23.6%	151	86.3%	2572	352	13.7%	291	82.7%	527	442	83.9%
Minor	2293	496	21.6%	99	20.0%	4772	274	5.7%	181	66.1%	770	280	36.4%
Total	3760	858	22.8%	395	46.0%	9210	894	9.7%	705	78.9%	1752	1100	62.8%

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**Appendix E**

**OM3**

The number of Section 74 Overruns that have occurred with a percentage of total works that have overrun

**Apr 21 - Mar 22**

	<b>HA</b>	<b>SU</b>
Number of works	2694	8633
Number of works with an overrun	37	99
Percentage of works with an overrun (%)	1.37%	1.15%

## Appendix F

### OM4

Average duration of phases by works category along with a total quantity of phases that meet the criteria

Apr 21 - Mar 22

Activity type	Average duration (HA)	Total number of phases (HA)	Average duration (SU)	Total number of phases (SU)
Major	7.99	27	9.68	76
Standard	5.75	33	5.45	122
Minor	1.73	142	1.81	264
Immediate (Urgent)	2.33	5	3.67	188
Immediate (Emergency)	2.14	17	4.81	33

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**Appendix G**

**OM6**

Number of collaborative works phases with the totals of working and calendar days of disruption saved

**Apr 21 - Mar 22**

<b>Activity type</b>	<b>HA</b>	<b>SU</b>	<b>Total</b>
Collaborative phases	11	52	63
Working days saved	68	440	508
Calendar days saved	92	593	685

## Appendix H

### AM3

Number of phases that have permits that were refused and then a variation was submitted with a reduced duration which was granted

Apr 21 - March 22

Activity type	HA	SU	Total
Phase total	10	52	62
Working days saved	15	125	140
Calendar days saved	16	171	187



**Appendix I**

**AM5**

Number of FPNs issued for permit breaches including withdrawn FPNs

Apr 21 - March 22

	HA	SU	Total
Number of granted permits	4035	12589	16624
% of the total no of works in the county	24.27%	75.73%	100.00%

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FPN type	HA			SU			Total
	No of FPNs	% of total FPNs issued	Break down by FPN code	No of FPNs	% of total FPNs issued	Break down by FPN code	No of FPNs
74 (Starts/Stops)	1456	73.2%	90.5%	534	26.8%	66.3%	1990
19 (Without a permit)	98	50.3%	6.1%	97	49.7%	12.0%	195
20 (Permit breaches)	55	23.9%	3.4%	175	76.1%	21.7%	230
Total	1609	66.6%	100.0%	806	33.4%	100.0%	2415

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Northumberland County Council  
Communities and Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee  
Work Programme 2022-2023

## 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

Food Recycling Pilot  
Woodhorn Charitable Trust

Northumberland County Council  
Communities and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2022-2023

**8 March 2023**

**Retained Firefighters**

To consider issues around the recruitment and retention of retained firefighters.

**Utility Companies on the Highway**

To receive an update on the Council's implementation of the Northumberland Street Works Permit Scheme.

**5 April 2023**

**Social Housing Regulations Bill**

To inform members of the impending Social Housing Regulations Bill and the implications that has for housing, in particular the introduction of a regulatory regime.

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**Homelessness & Rough Sleeper Strategy**

This report will be considered by Cabinet in March and will outline the draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2022-2026 for review and agreement.

**26 April 2023**

**Library Service Strategy 2021-26**

To update the Committee on the implementation of the Strategy.

**Northumberland Infrastructure Funding Statement**

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

Northumberland County Council  
Communities and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee Monitoring Report 2022-2023

Ref	Date	Report	Decision	Outcome
1.	1 June 2022	<b>Development of the Potland Burn Biodiversity Net Gain Site</b>	<b>RESOLVED</b> that the Committee: 1. Supported the recommendations in the report. 2. The report and presentation be recommended for inclusion within the work programme for the Ashington and Blyth Local Area Council with an invitation to Ashington Town Council and Pegswood Parish Council to involve them in the discussion.	No further action required as this time.
Page 84	29 June 2022	<b>Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy 2022/25</b>	<b>RESOLVED</b> that the Committee: 1. Supported the recommendations in the report. 2. The protocol for the setting of EVCP tariff be considered by Communities & Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee at a future meeting. 3. Encourage members to undertake the climate change training.	The Committee be consulted prior to the setting of the EVCP Tariff.
	29 June 2022	<b>Northumberland Waste Management Strategy – Proposed Food Waste Recycling Pilot Schemes</b>	<b>RESOLVED</b> that the Committee: 1. Supported the recommendations in the report. 2. Consider involvement by local schools in the home compost bin trial. 3. Receive an interim report on the home compost trial in Autumn 2022 with a final report on the kerbside collection in the summer of 2023.	The Committee to receive an update on the trial before the end of the year.
4.	31 August 2022	<b>Fleet Replacement Update</b>	<b>RESOLVED</b> that the work undertaken to deliver a challenging fleet replacement programme during 2021/22, be noted.	The Committee will continue to receive this as an annual update.
5.	31 August 2022	<b>Food and Feed, Safety and Standards Service Plan 2022/23</b>	<b>RESOLVED</b> that:	Cabinet considered the OSC's comments when it determined the

			<p>a. Cabinet be advised that the Communities &amp; Place OSC endorses the recommendation in the report.</p> <p>b. The Cabinet be recommended to request that the Government makes the displaying of food hygiene ratings at food business premises mandatory.</p>	report on 21 September 2022.
6.	5 October 2022	<b>Endorsement of the Northumberland Destination Management Plan 2022-2032</b>	<b>RESOLVED</b> that Cabinet be advised that the Communities & Place OSC supported the recommendation contained in the report.	Cabinet considered the OSC's comments when it determined the report on 11 October 2022.
7.	5 October 2022	<b>Storm Arwen, Community Resilience Update</b>	<b>RESOLVED</b> that (a) The report be received. (b) The Communities and Place OSC continues to support the concept of community resilience within Northumberland.	The Committee will consider the Storm Arwen recommendations in respect of Adult Care at the January meeting.
8. Page 856	26 October 2022	<b>Active Northumberland Annual Outcome Report 2021-22 including Service Plan Successes 2021-22</b>	<b>RESOLVED</b> that that Active Northumberland's Annual Outcomes Report 2021-22, be received.	The Committee will continue to receive annual reports of the performance of Active Northumberland.
	7 December 2022	<b>Electric Vehicle Charging Tariff Setting Methodology</b>	<b>RESOLVED</b> that that the report be received.	No further action is required at this stage.
10.	7 December 2022	<b>Corporate Feedback Performance 2021/2022</b>	<b>RESOLVED</b> that the report be received.	The Committee will continue to receive annual reports on Corporate Feedback.
11.	11 January 2023	<b>Storm Arwen Review – Adult Care</b>	<b>RESOLVED</b> that the update be received.	Further monitoring of the Adult Care recommendation will be overseen by the Health and Wellbeing OSC.
12.	11 January 2023	<b>Tree and Woodland Strategy</b>	<b>RESOLVED</b> that the information be noted and consideration be given to inclusion of the issues raised in the Tree Management Policy.	The final draft of the Strategy be presented to the Committee in Summer 2023.

