



# Northumberland County Council

**Your ref:**

**Our ref:**

**Enquiries to:** Nichola Turnbull

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**Tel direct:** 01670 622617

**Date:** Tuesday, 18 July 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, 26 JULY 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, 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. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

#### 2. MINUTES

(Pages 1  
- 10)

Minutes of the meeting of the Communities and Place OSC held on 31 May 2023, as circulated, to be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

#### 3. DISCLOSURE OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Unless already entered in the Council's Register of Members' interests, members are required 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.

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

(Pages  
11 - 22)

To note the schedule of decisions made by Cabinet since the last meeting together with latest Forward Plan of key decisions. Any further changes made to the Forward Plan will be reported to the Committee.

### **OVERVIEW**

*The Cabinet Members requested to attend for the following items are Councillor Colin Horncastle, Portfolio Holder for Looking After Our Environment and Councillor John Riddle, Portfolio Holder for Improving Our Roads and Highways.*

#### **5. PORTFOLIO HOLDER PRESENTATIONS**

To receive an overview from the Portfolio Holders for Improving Our Roads and Highways, and Looking After Our Environment on forthcoming issues within their remits and to discuss with the Committee how they can collaborate to achieve the Council's priorities as set out in the Corporate Plan, including opportunities for pre-decision scrutiny where the OSC can be consulted at an early stage of policy development, and monitoring the performance of services.

##### **5.1 Presentation by the Portfolio Holder for Improving Our Roads and Highways**

(Pages  
23 - 28)

##### **5.2 Presentation by the Portfolio Holder for Looking After Our Environment**

(Pages  
29 - 46)

*The Cabinet Member requested to attend for the following item is Councillor Colin Horncastle, Portfolio Holder for Looking After Our Environment.*

#### **6. UPDATE ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF A TREE MANAGEMENT POLICY**

(Pages  
47 - 54)

To inform the committee of progress on the development of a Tree Management Policy for the Council, outline the draft structure for that policy and enable committee members to make further suggestions regarding policy development.

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

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

(Pages  
55 - 60)

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 2023/24 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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## 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, 31 May 2023 at 2.00 p.m.

#### PRESENT

Councillor N. Oliver  
(Chair, in the Chair)

#### MEMBERS

Dale, A.	Lang, J.
Gallacher, B.	Morphet, N.
Mather, M.	Reid, J.

#### CABINET MEMBERS

C. Horncastle	Looking After Our Environment
G. Stewart	Looking After Our Communities

#### OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

R. Clow	Area Manager, Fire and Rescue Services
H. Davison	Assistant Project Manager, Climate Change
D. Groves	Commercial and Contracts Manager
P Jones	Director of Environment and Transport
J. McNeil	Assistant Chief Fire Officer
S. Nicholson	Scrutiny Co-Ordinator
N. Turnbull	Democratic Services Officer

#### ALSO PRESENT

1 member of the press.

#### 1. MEMBERSHIP AND TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Membership and Terms of Reference, as agreed by Council at the meeting on 17 May 2023, had been circulated for information.

**RESOLVED** that the Communities & Place OSC's membership and terms of reference, as agreed by Council on 17 May 2023, be noted.

## 2. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Colin Curtis and Councillors Cartie and Castle.

## 3. MINUTES

It was requested that any actions identified within the minutes be followed up.

**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:

- 1) 5 April 2023
- 2) 26 April 2023

## 4. FORWARD PLAN OF CABINET DECISIONS

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

The Scrutiny Co-Ordinator reported that the Portfolio Holders and Senior Officers were to be invited to the next few meetings of the committee to outline forthcoming issues that members may wish to consider including in the work programme.

In answer to a question regarding how matters scheduled for Cabinet were to be included within the work programme in the future, the Scrutiny Co-Ordinator suggested that he or the Scrutiny Officer circulate all draft Cabinet minutes. Any requests from members that they felt should be scrutinised be made to the Chair / Vice-Chair / himself for possible inclusion at an appropriate point in the future following implementation of a decision.

It was noted that a part confidential report was due to be considered by Cabinet on 13 June 2023 on the 'Ashington Regeneration Programme Establishment – Strategic Sites Acquisition'. The Chair suggested that local members who wanted more information should contact Councillor Ploszaj, the responsible Portfolio Holder, to request a meeting to find out more about the proposals and provide feedback.

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

## 5. OVERVIEW

### 5.1 Firefighter's Decontamination

The Committee received a presentation from James McNeil, Assistant Chief Fire Officer and Robin Clow, Area Manager, on the risk of contaminants from fires and the measures that could be put in place to reduce the risk of these impacting on the health and safety of firefighters. (A copy of the presentation is enclosed with the signed minutes.)

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO) stated that firefighters were 7 times more likely to have cancer than the general public and were also diagnosed earlier in their 40s and 50s.

Robin Clow explained that fires produced a cocktail of chemicals including carcinogenic materials. Personal protective equipment (PPE) protected firefighters' skin and respiratory systems, but wind conditions could also mean that those outside were also impacted by smoke and air borne fibres which may or may not be visible or easily wiped off. They caused both acute toxicity and / or chronic toxicity which impacted on the body's internal organs.

They hoped to work with Professor Anna Stec at the University of Central Lancashire (UCLAN) who was researching the assessment of toxic irritant hazards of fires and the source of much of the information and recommendations.

Examples of the PPE were demonstrated including new breathing apparatus, helmet and coat and comparison made with a dirty helmet enclosed in a protective bag. The latter in the past had been seen as a badge of honour by experienced firefighters.

He described how firefighters previously would sit in fire appliances after a fire covered in the products of combustion which would be inhaled, ingested or absorbed through the skin. In the past, fire stations may have smelled of smoke but, following the introduction of new procedures, this was no longer the case. If there was a smell of smoke, this could lead to cross-contamination by visitors including members of the public and children.

Steps being introduced to reduce contamination included:

- Wearing of respiratory protective equipment during firefighting, salvage and venting of buildings, including fire investigation, and for this to be the last piece of PPE to be removed.
- Equipment suspected of contamination should be removed and placed in air-tight containers with a 'clean cab' policy and on-scene use of hero wipes to remove contaminants from any exposed skin.
- Avoiding eating and drinking, changing clothes, showering within an hour, regular health screening.
- A rigorous cleaning and inspection regime for PPE.
- Creation of designated zones:
  - Red / dirty - operational areas such as appliance bays, equipment storage, briefing rooms.
  - Amber – transitional areas for the removal and cleaning of PPE.

- Green / clean areas including public entrances, offices, recreational and meeting rooms.
- A new contract with a company in Durham provided a much faster turnaround for the cleaning of asbestos contaminated PPE.
- Working with Occupational Health, inspection of shower facilities and testing for contaminants by external companies.

The ACFO thanked his colleagues for the work that they had undertaken recently on policies and procedures to mitigate the risk of firefighter contamination. He also expressed his gratitude to the current and former portfolio holders for their support.

Members held the fire and rescue service in high regard and were saddened to learn of the additional hazards faced by firefighters and supported the work that was taking place to protect them.

Councillor Stewart, Portfolio Holder for Looking After Our Communities commented that the fire and rescue services most important resource was its people and that the Council needed to do everything it could to ensure their safety.

In answer to questions, it was explained that:

- The watch manager assessed conditions on site and dependent on wind direction and other factors, created a safe zone with a cordon between members of the public and an incident. If the wind speed or direction changed, the distance would be increased to reduce the potential risk of contamination for members of the public. Generally, bigger and better burning fires were less of a risk than those which smoldered.
- Fire damaged buildings were not handed back to owners or landlords until they had been properly ventilated and were clear of smoke.
- Forensic investigation teams were now provided with breathing apparatus.
- The work on contaminants was in the early stages including identification of contaminants and exposure, the prevalence, and types of cancers and differences between male and female firefighters. The work would in due course involve retired firefighters as well as the current workforce. Decontamination had not existed for former firefighters.
- It was not yet known how application of the measures recommended in the UCLAN report would impact on the likelihood of illness. Some measures were relatively easy to implement such as the removal of dirty PPE and prompt showering. The next stage of the research involved taking blood samples which Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) hoped to be involved in.
- Individuals were responsible for cleaning and inspecting their own PPE to ensure that it was in an adequate condition. It was also inspected by a shift supervisor on a set frequency following a 30-point checklist provided by equipment manufacturer. A further inspection was undertaken annually by a third party who also cleaned and reapplied water repellent properties.
- A decontamination and de-robing process for asbestos and other chemicals had been in place for many years and was now utilised for other

contaminants. The last stage involved the removal of gloves and the breathing apparatus mask with equipment bagged and placed in lockers on the fire engine.

- Hero wipes were used to clean any exposed skin on wrists and necks and were effective. Bags with dissolvable seams enabled dirty clothing to be placed in washing machines without needing to be handled.
- The procedure for decontamination had been implemented at the end of 2022.
- Ordinarily, fire personnel would be issued with 2 sets of fire kit, and this was sufficient unless there was a particularly busy shift with back to back fires.
- The turnaround time for heavily contaminated kit had been reduced from 2 weeks to 48 hours by changing to a nearer company in Durham. The majority of kit was cleaned at the fire station and would be properly dry in 24 hours. Rural fire stations had smaller industrial washing machines.
- Individuals did not currently record potential exposures from incidents. Arrangements were being put in place with Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust for enhanced health surveillance as well as self-assessment of urine samples before and after an exposure to fire to establish base line data and monitor levels.
- Medical examinations of firefighters were undertaken every three years which increased to an annual basis for personnel aged 50 and over.

Councillor Horncastle, as former Chair of the Fire and Rescue Authority, thanked the senior officers NFRS for their prompt action progressing the issue of decontamination following the publication of the UCLAN report, to protect not only front-line staff, but also other staff, visitors and families.

It was proposed that the committee make the following recommendation to Cabinet that financial support for the recommendations made by the fire and rescue service be provided to ensure that Northumberland was leading reduce the risk of contamination and supporting fire and rescue personnel.

The Chair agreed with a suggestion that there should be surplus kit to ensure that it could be rotated adequately. He thanked officers for their informative presentation.

**RESOLVED** that Cabinet be recommended to agree that financial support for the recommendations made by the fire and rescue service be provided to ensure that Northumberland was leading to reduce the risk of contamination and supporting fire and rescue personnel.

## **5.2 Food Waste Recycling Pilot Update**

The Committee received a presentation from Paul Jones, Director of Environment and Transport, David Groves, Commercial and Contracts Manager and Hannah Davison, Assistant Project Manager, Climate Change Team, to consider the outcomes of the Food Waste Recycling Pilot and next steps. (A copy of the presentation is enclosed with the signed minutes.)

The purpose of the food waste kerbside collection trial was to confirm modelled assumptions on household kerbside food waste collections and explore the feasibility of using home compost bins as an alternative for rural households where collection services would be resource intensive. The presentation included:

- Details of the areas, collection dates, disposal and set out rates to date. The average set out rate of 47.2% compared favorably with WRAP national figures.
- Key findings from the trial.
- Impact on residual waste collections.
- Data analysis of residents who had opted out of the food waste collection trial.
- Future options and next steps:
  - A user satisfaction survey was to be carried out to assess any issues raised by users.
  - Further consideration of bag liners and research of alternative liners, containers and vehicles.
  - DEFRA commitment that regulations and guidance will soon be issued that will require food waste collections be provided by local authorities in England from April 2025. Northumberland had made an application to DEFRA for transitional arrangements that would require food waste collections to be delivered in Northumberland from April 2026 due to the added complexity of implementing food waste collections in the county which require negotiation of changes to our long term Waste PFI Contract arrangements.
  - It was expected that the Government would meet the cost of providing food waste collections through 'New Burdens' funding.
  - Data from the trial was helping to inform how many collection rounds, vehicles and employees and containers would be needed.
  - A Technical Environmental and Economically Practicable (TEEP) assessment of services would determine the extent of the roll-out of the kerbside food waste collection service to households across the county. It was likely that provision of home composting equipment would be a more practical, cost effective and sustainable solution in some very rural communities.
- Home compost bins had been offered to residents in Gilsland, Elsdon and Chatton with 40 households currently participating.
- The autumn period had not been the best time to commence the home compost bin trial as temperatures in the hot compost bin of between 40-60c were required to process dairy and meat products.
- An analysis of the contents of residential bins be undertaken to obtain information on residents understanding and attitude to waste.

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

- It was confirmed that the polythene liners were extracted from the food waste and sent to energy from waste for incineration.



- The 23 litre food waste containers were a similar in size to a knee-high bucket with a secure lid.
- The home compost bins were 200 litres and modular which enabled compost to be pulled out from the bottom with a small rake. The turnaround for compost was 90 days, although it was recommended that the first batch be recycled and put back in the compost bin.
- Whilst the home composting units being used in the pilot scheme could safely take cooked food waste, dairy or meat products as they achieve high temperatures via a 'hot composting' process, it was highlighted that households should not place these types of waste into standard types of home-compost bins (which are cold composters) as this could attract vermin and pests.
- Removal of food waste from residual waste had an impact on the calorific value and was being monitored as part of the trial and discussions held with the contractor. Food waste recovery to anaerobic digestion was significantly better for the environment than going to an energy from waste facility as per the waste hierarchy. The former created biomethane and could be used as part of gas supplies and organic substrate to improve soil which was a better use of the material.
- The Government wanted all Local Authorities in England to commence food waste collections from 2025. Northumberland had been recognised as requiring transitional arrangements due to the complexities of the PFI waste contract which would need to be renegotiated and had sought additional time with food collections starting from 2026. Residents did not have to use the additional recycling services although they would be encouraged as it would be better for the environment. Comparison was made with the uptake by Welsh residents of 40% participating in kerbside food recycling collections. In Northumberland the residual waste from anyone that opted out of participating in food waste recycling collections would be processed via Energy from Waste plants and not landfill.
- The refuse operatives counted how many bins were presented on each collection but were unable to monitor if the same residents put their food waste bins out every week. More information was to be sought via the feedback collection survey.
- It was expected that the food waste bins would be presented weekly, due to the nature of the material, odour and the possibility that the liners would not keep their integrity for a longer period.
- The theory was that food waste might be linked to affluence and was something to be captured in the feedback survey asking questions around household size etc.
- In addition to the food waste trials, there was also a kerbside glass collection trial across 5,000 properties. The basis of the trials was to capture actual data in Northumberland on presentation rates, yields, tonnages expected and number of collection vehicles required. Data from the trial was being assessed against modelling assumptions on how the services would be provided county wide across Northumberland and the cost. Until more detail was provided by the Government in the regulations and funding arrangements, it was unknown how far the services could be provided or how much the Council would need to contribute.

- The new legislation placed an obligation on local authorities to provide collection services for the full range of materials from every household, unless excluded by a TEEP assessment. The latter would be robustly challenged by DEFRA as it was expected that services would be provided to the maximum number of residents possible.
- Plastic pots, tubs and trays were not currently collected in Northumberland as they were small items of mixed plastic polymers generally contaminated with food waste and would be mixed with paper products in the recycling bin. Sorting the material would be problematic, it had a very low-end value, limited use and had previously involved export abroad with concerns regarding the processing arrangements and would not likely be supported. Due to the aforementioned technical logistics and explanation, Northumberland had focused on high value plastic bottles with robust end markets in the UK and able to be sorted and separated from the fibre-based products by the technology utilised at the West Sleekburn processing plant.
- Feedback from residents on the containers would be important to inform decisions going forward and to ensure they were vermin proof and could not be accessed by other animals.
- The areas in the food waste trial were representative of the demographic of Northumberland as a whole. It was accepted there were different issues and concerns rolling out food waste collection services across rural and urban areas, including space for bins.
- Findings from trials elsewhere had made residents more conscious of what was being placed in their bins and influenced what they bought and cooked which led to tonnages collected reducing over time as less was being wasted.
- The kerbside collection of glass trial was taking place with the council's own vehicles on a Friday. A specialist vehicle had been hired for the food waste trial to ensure the material was entirely enclosed. The size and type of vehicle would also be assessed as part of the trial. It was expected that a fleet of specialist food waste vehicles would be acquired in the future and procured through the lowest cost to provide a permanent service in the long term.
- Food waste was the hardest recycling service to provide as it required the biggest input from households with the material being smelly and sloppy. The Council had followed WRAP guidelines and advice from other organisations which had found there was a better uptake when bin liners had been provided although many other local authorities had stopped using them.
- The cost of bin liners varied from 1p per bag for polyethene to 7/8p for a compostable bag. £5,000 had been budgeted for bin liners for the trial. The Council was considering what provided the best value for money given that the liners were removed when the material was being processed.
- It was expected that a food waste service would also be provided to commercial premises including takeaways, restaurants and cafes. The County Hall restaurant was participating in the food waste trial. This tended to be simpler in hospitality as staff were familiar with the separation of food waste.

- Meat and dairy products could be placed in the hot compost bins provided as part of the trial but were not suitable for traditional cold compost bins. Large quantities of liquids such as milk, oil and water or large bones were not recommended for the home hot compost bins.
- Community and other solutions needed to be investigated so that all residents could manage their waste more sustainably. Whilst some parish councils had expressed an interest in a community compost facility, it would need someone to manage the process, check for contamination and mix the contents. It was noted that Mid Ulster County Council in Northern Ireland collected food waste in two different streams; urban areas had a dedicated food waste collection with rural areas receiving a mixed food and garden waste collection service.
- Recycled plastic bags had not been included as an option within the procurement framework. The use of bin liners had been debated but refuse operatives elsewhere had found them useful for spillages and contamination etc. The issue would be considered further.
- There had been limited availability when sourcing containers for the food waste trial and officers were mindful there would be high demand for these and specialist vehicles for the roll out of services in 2025 and 2026.
- It was expected that the collection of a wider range of recycled materials, a monthly glass collection and weekly food waste collection would take the Council towards the Government's overall recycling target of 55%. Out of the remaining 45%, they hoped to maximise what could go to the Energy from Waste plant to reduce what was being sent to landfill.
- The Council currently received over £2 million per annum from the sale of recycled material as well as income from the Energy from Waste plant and these were factored into the Council's budget. The cost of collecting and dealing with the waste in Northumberland exceeded £20 million.
- It was expected that Councils would receive a significant increase in their revenue support grants from new burdens funding to provide the additional kerbside collection services and extended producer responsibility regulations would tax manufacturers and producers of plastic packaging which would help subsidise the cost of services.
- The environmental cost of the service would be considered as part of the project.

Members raised the following points:

- Soft plastics could be recycled at local supermarkets such as the Co-op.
- Some residents in urban areas continued to use plastic bags for their waste and were to be provided with communal bins.
- Additional provision was required for pest control in the county.
- The review of the containers was welcomed; it was suggested that weighted and rounded bins would be less likely to be knocked or blown over.
- Consideration needed to be given to the council's planning strategy to ensure there was enough room for bins when new properties were built.
- They were keen to be involved and find solutions that suited their own communities.

Councillor Horncastle, Portfolio Holder for Looking After Our Environment, commented that he had only recently taken responsibility for the service and would be meeting with officers in the near future. He thanked the officers and refuse operatives for facilitating the trials to enable data to be collected. The scale of providing the service could not be underestimated given that there were residential properties along 3,500 miles of roads within the county.

**RESOLVED** that the presentation be received and food waste trial results to date be noted.

## 6. REPORT OF THE SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATOR

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

The Committee reviewed its work programme for the 2023/24 council year. (Report enclosed with the signed minutes).

The Scrutiny Co-ordinator reported that the Portfolio Holders would be invited to the next 2 meetings to highlight issues coming forward to enable the Committee to identify issues to be added to the work programme.

A member enquired about the Transport Asset Management Plan and whether the OSC should conduct an in-depth examination of safety on the highway and how it was managed across all areas. It was agreed that this would be discussed with the Portfolio Holder for Improving Our Roads and Highways when he makes his presentation at the next meeting.

In answer to a question, the Service Director for Environment and Transport suggested that there would be insufficient time to undertake a review of the Local Transport Plan Programme process for the next financial year as work was already underway and this should be considered for the future.

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

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

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

# Agenda Item 4

## DECISIONS TAKEN BY CABINET SINCE LAST OSC MEETING AND FORTHCOMING CABINET DECISIONS MAY TO SEPTEMBER 2023

DECISION	CABINET DATE/DECISION
<b>Cabinet Papers – 9 May</b>	<a href="https://northumberland.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=140&amp;MId=2016">https://northumberland.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=140&amp;MId=2016</a>
<p><b>Corporate Plan</b></p> <p>This report presented the Council’s Corporate Plan for 2023-2026. The Plan built on the progress from the previous Corporate Plan and presented a refreshed vision, and three Council priorities. This refresh took account of the changing operating context and the recommendations of the Independent Review of Governance (‘Caller Review’) which reported to Full Council in June 2022. Moving forward, the three Priorities in the Plan would set the context for the Council’s Budget and Medium-Term Financial planning process. Service planning, the performance framework, and staff appraisal process would all contribute to achieving the priorities.</p>	<p>9 May 2023:</p> <p><b>RESOLVED</b> that Cabinet:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) recommend to Full Council the new Corporate Plan 2023-26 for adoption at its meeting of 17th May.</li> <li>(2) note the proposal to Full Council to receive and consider an annual Corporate Plan Achievements Report at Full Council in March each year.</li> <li>(3) note the proposal to Full Council to receive and consider an annual Corporate Plan Performance Report at Full Council at the conclusion of Quarter four of the performance cycle.</li> </ol>
<p><b>North East Bus Service Improvement Plan</b></p> <p>The report outlined the implications of the Bus Service Improvement Plan for Northumberland bus services and infrastructure</p>	<p>9 May 2023:</p> <p><b>RESOLVED</b> that Cabinet:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) note the decision of the North East Combined Authority and the North of Tyne Combined Authority, acting together through the <b>North East</b> Joint Transport Committee to make an Enhanced Bus Partnership for the region;</li> <li>(2) delegate authority to the Executive Director for Regeneration, in consultation with the Executive Director of Finance (Section 151 officer), to accept the funding for bus service improvements, once confirmed, from Transport North East; and</li> <li>(3) authorise the creation of a Northumberland Local Bus Board.</li> </ol>

<p><b>Financial Performance 2022-23 – Position at the end of February 2023 (Provisional Outturn 2022-23)</b></p>	<p><b>9 May 2023:</b></p> <p>The report was considered by the Corporate Services and Economic Growth OSC on 26 June 2023.</p>
<p><b>Outcomes of the Consultation on Proposals for the Berwick Partnership</b></p>	<p><b>9 May 2023:</b></p> <p>The report was considered by FACS OSC on 4 May 2023.</p>
<p><b>Public Report from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO)</b></p> <p>Members were informed that a Public Interest Report had been issued by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) in relation to a complaint raised by a Northumberland County Council resident in relation to the Post 16 Transport Policy.</p>	<p><b>9 May 2023:</b></p> <p>To see the full decision, follow this link:</p> <p><a href="https://northumberland.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=140&amp;MId=2016">https://northumberland.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=140&amp;MId=2016</a></p>
<p><b>Energising Blyth Programme: Culture Hub and Market Place Outline Business Case</b></p> <p>The report sought the approval of the Outline Business Case (OBC) and project budget for the Culture Hub and Market Place project. This flagship project will initiate the regeneration of Blyth town centre.</p>	<p><b>9 May 2023:</b></p> <p><b>RESOLVED</b> that Cabinet</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) approve the Outline Business Case (OBC) summarised in this report for the Culture Hub and Market Place project to enable progression to Full Business Case</li> <li>(2) approve a total revised budget in the Capital Programme of £14,705,732. There is a current budget in the Capital Programme of £12,536,685 this report requests approval of £2,169,047 drawn from existing Council funds allocated to the Energising Blyth Programme. The project was funded by HM government Future High Streets Fund and the Council as set out in Financial Tables 3-5</li> <li>(3) note that Jam Jar Cinema Community Interest Company (CIC) will be formally appointed as the main operator of the Culture Hub and that an operator for the Creative Play concession within the facility will be appointed in due course subject to Cabinet approval of the recommendations in this report</li> <li>(4) delegate authority, in accordance with the Energising Blyth Local Assurance Framework, to the Council's s151 Officer following consideration by the Energising Blyth Programme Board to approve the Full Business Case and report any subsequent capital implications to Cabinet (via</li> </ol>

	<p>the Capital Strategy Group) for inclusion in the Capital Programme</p> <p>(5) delegate approvals to the Executive Director for Place and Regeneration to enter into any contracts relating to the project subject to confirmation of associated funding being in place and the appropriate procurement processes being followed.</p>
<p><b>The Future of the Berwick Museum and Art Collections</b></p> <p>Members were asked to agree the future housing of the Berwick Museum and Art collections in the custodianship of the Council and currently managed by Museums Northumberland within the context of the opportunities and challenges presented by The Living Barracks Initiative.</p>	<p><b>9 May 2023:</b></p> <p><b>RESOLVED</b> that Cabinet approve the retention of the Berwick Museum and art collections as part of The Living Barracks initiative, subject to further discussions with relevant partners on the issues set out at paragraph 47 of the report.</p>
<p><b>The Market Sustainability and Improvement Fund 2023/24</b></p> <p>Members received proposals for the allocation in 2023/24 of a Government grant for adult social care. Urgent approval of a broad approach to the use of this grant was required to comply with a grant condition requiring submission of proposals by 24 May.</p>	<p><b>9 May 2023:</b></p> <p><b>RESOLVED</b> that Cabinet:</p> <p>(1) approve the proposed uses of the Market Sustainability and Improvement Fund (MSIF) in 2023/24 set out in this report, and the resulting commitments in subsequent years, which it is anticipated can be funded through the increased MSIF grant in 2024/25 and will be covered in later years either by continuation of this grant or by consolidation of the funding into the general local government financial settlement;</p> <p>(2) authorise the Executive Director – Adults, Ageing and Well-Being, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Adult Well-being, to make detailed decisions about the allocation of this grant, within the broad framework set out in this report, taking account of further consultations with care providers and any other relevant information which becomes available.</p>
<p><b>Cabinet Papers – 13 June</b></p>	<p><a href="https://northumberland.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=140&amp;MId=2247">https://northumberland.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=140&amp;MId=2247</a></p>
<p><b>Ashington Regeneration Programme Establishment – Strategic Sites Acquisition</b></p> <p>The report update Cabinet regarding the establishment, development and delivery of</p>	<p>13 June 2023:</p> <p><b>RESOLVED</b> that:</p> <p>(a) Cabinet endorse the Ashington Investment Plan as the overarching strategy that will provide the context, vision</p>

<p>the £30m Ashington Regeneration Programme, which would have a catalytic impact on the town's economy and drive forward the implementation of the Ashington Town Investment Plan.</p> <p>The report also sought approval for the strategic acquisition of the Woodhorn Road site and the Wansbeck Square site from Advance Northumberland (Commercial) Limited to create the required development platform to enable implementation of the Ashington Regeneration Programme</p>	<p>and aspirations for delivery of the phased Ashington Regeneration Programme; and</p> <p>(b) Cabinet agree the establishment of the Ashington Regeneration Programme with two initial phases associated with the Ashington High Street Innovation Programme (HSIP) and Town Centre Renewal of Strategic Sites Programme;</p> <p>(c) Cabinet approve the associated financial profiles as set out in Appendix 1 whilst:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• endorsing the bid submitted to extend the HSIP Programme with a funding ask of £576,898 and acceptance of this additional funding into the Medium Term Financial Plan, if successful</li> <li>• approving an initial allocation of £1,000,000 in the Medium Term Financial Plan to be fully funded by the Government to develop plans for Wansbeck Square Strategic Site</li> <li>• approving an initial grant allocation of £600,000 in the Medium Term Financial Plan to be fully funded by the Government to develop plans for Portland Park Strategic Site</li> <li>• authorising the Executive Director for Place and Regeneration to enter into contracts up to the value of £1.6m for the development of the strategic sites and delivery of public realm capital works, subject to confirmation of associated funding being in place and the appropriate procurement processes being followed;</li> </ul> <p>(d) authority be delegated to the Executive Director for Place and Regeneration, in consultation with the s151 Officer, to purchase the Woodhorn Road site, at a value up to a maximum of £210,000 from funding already allocated in the Medium Term Financial Plan;</p> <p>(e) Cabinet approve the acquisition of the Wansbeck Square site, and delegate authority to the Executive Director for Place and Regeneration, in consultation with the S151 Officer, to acquire the Wansbeck Square site at a value up to a maximum of £1,365,000 with funding from the Strategic Regeneration Projects budget within the Capital Programme; and</p> <p>(f) Cabinet agree the associated programme management and assurance arrangements to support the programme's delivery as set out in the report</p>
<p><b>Enhanced Pothole Repair Pilot</b></p> <p>The report sought approval to undertake an 'invest to save' trial of first-time patch repair of a proportion of actionable carriageway pothole defects, to quantify the costs and benefits associated with this alternative approach to one of the main revenue funded</p>	<p>13 June 2023:</p> <p><b>RESOLVED</b> that:</p> <p>(a) Cabinet approve the commencement of a 3-month 'invest to save' trial of first time patch repair of a proportion of actionable carriageway pothole defects in the North and Tynedale Local Area Committee areas of the County, and</p> <p>(b) Cabinet approve the allocation of £492,600 in revenue funds from the severe weather reserve to fund the pilot scheme.</p> <p>.</p>



highway maintenance activities undertaken by the Council.	
<p><b>Potential Loan to Northumberland Community Bank</b></p> <p>The report provided details of a potential loan facility to Northumberland Community Bank (NCB) of £50,000 towards the capital reserve.</p>	<p>13 June 2023:</p> <p><b>RESOLVED</b> that Cabinet approve a loan facility of £50,000 to Northumberland Community Bank subject to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NCB agreeing to the proposed terms and conditions;</li> <li>• NCC’s Legal Team completing a legal agreement with NCB in advance of any loan drawdown by NCB, containing the terms and conditions set out within this report; and</li> <li>• Subsidy Control implications being investigated and satisfied.</li> </ul>
<p><b>UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) Update and Northumberland Delivery</b></p> <p>The report provided an update on the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) programme and the UKSPF funded projects secured by Northumberland County Council to support levelling-up activity across the County.</p>	<p>13 June 2023:</p> <p><b>RESOLVED</b> that</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Cabinet endorse the progress and content of the UKSPF Investment and Delivery Plans for the North of Tyne Area;</li> <li>(b) Cabinet welcome and endorse the Northumberland County Council-led UKSPF funded projects, described in this report and summarised in table 1, which secures over £7.085m to deliver a range of levelling-up activities and support for Northumberland’s businesses and residents over 2022 – 2025; and</li> <li>(c) Cabinet endorse the Inclusive Economy Community Partnership project, which, working with the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS), will build capacity and deliver activities in support of the inclusive economy, focused in our most deprived communities and, if successful, accept £0.4m capital and 1.15m revenue funding into the Medium-Term Financial Plan.</li> </ol>
<b>Cabinet Papers – 11 July</b>	<a href="https://northumberland.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=140&amp;MId=2248">https://northumberland.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=140&amp;MId=2248</a>
<p><b>Report of the Communities and Place OSC - Firefighters Decontamination</b></p>	<p>11 July 2023:</p> <p><b>RESOLVED</b> that Cabinet approve the recommendation of the Communities and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee that financial support for the recommendations made by the fire and rescue service be provided to ensure that Northumberland leads the way to reduce the risk of contamination and support fire and rescue personnel.</p>
<p><b>District Heating Update and Partnership Procurement</b></p> <p>To provide a summary of the progress made across the eight District Heating studies completed for the county, feedback on proposed delivery</p>	<p>11 July 2023:</p> <p><b>RESOLVED</b> that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Cabinet agree that the council’s preferred delivery option for District Heating is Model 3 (Supply Framework). Under this model the Council will enter into a framework agreement with a Heat Provider and agree a form of</li> </ol>

<p>models for the schemes and seek approval to proceed with the next phase of activity</p>	<p>connection and supply agreement to be used for the supply of heat to the Council across the eight towns, namely Alnwick, Ashington, Berwick, Blyth, Cramlington, Hexham, Morpeth and Prudhoe on a town-by town basis as the schemes go-live;</p> <p>(b) Cabinet approve a procurement exercise to select and appoint a legal and commercial advisor to support the procurement activities needed to appoint a Heat Provider. The forecast cost of the external legal and commercial advisor support is ~£160,000, which it is expected will be 100% funded through the NELEP Energy Accelerator Fund at no additional cost to NCC. In the unlikely case that the NELEP do not fund the project a separate request for NCC to provide funding will be made;</p> <p>(c) Cabinet resource and undertake a procurement exercise to appoint a Heat Provider;</p> <p>(d) Cabinet agree to the inclusion of the council's future heat load to be in scope for commercially viable District Heating schemes in each of the eight locations, provided the commercial, economic and net zero tests are met by the Heat Provider; and</p> <p>(e) the timescales for delivery given market competition, be noted.</p>
<p><b>Northumberland Stewardship and Rural Growth Investment Programme – Nature Recovery Response</b></p> <p>To outline the Council's role in leading the region's response to nature recovery as set out in the North East Devolution Deal and, within this context, seek consideration to the declaration of an ecological emergency in Northumberland.</p>	<p>11 July 2023:</p> <p><b>RESOLVED</b> that</p> <p>(a) Cabinet accept, in principle and subject to the approval of the North of Tyne Combined Authority (NTCA) Cabinet, the role of leading the development of the statutory North of Tyne Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) on behalf of the Combined Authority;</p> <p>(b) Cabinet endorse the Council's role as accountable body for the participation of the English part of the Borderlands area in the Government's Local Investment in Natural Capital (LINC) programme;</p> <p>(c) Cabinet accept the anticipated grant awards of £0.285 million and £1.000 million respectively for the development of the North of Tyne LNRS and the delivery of the Borderlands LINC into the Council's revenue budget;</p> <p>(d) Cabinet agree to declaring an ecological emergency to further strengthen the Council's commitment to rural stewardship and to demonstrate the significant role of nature recovery in mitigating the climate emergency;</p>

	<p>(e) Cabinet develop a response, within the context of our Climate Change Action Plan, to the ecological emergency using our new obligations under the Environment Act 2021 as a framework; namely the development of a Local Nature Recovery Strategy; the strengthened duty to conserve and enhance biodiversity with a requirement to publish action plans and progress reports; and the introduction of mandatory biodiversity net gain in the planning system; and</p> <p>(f) A progress report be made to Cabinet in six months.</p>
<p><b>Asset Management Framework</b></p> <p>To provide Cabinet with information relating to the new Asset Management Framework for 2023-2026 that has been developed to guide decision making and clearly outline the strategic plans for the estate to 2026.</p>	<p>11 July 2023:</p> <p><b>RESOLVED</b> that:</p> <p>(a) Cabinet note the purpose and content of the Asset Management Framework for 2023-2026; and</p> <p>(b) Cabinet agree to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The new Asset Management Framework; as attached at Appendix 1 – and</li> <li>• Receive further updates on the delivery of the Asset Management Framework on a quarterly basis.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Financial Performance 2022-23 – Final Outturn (subject to audit)</b></p> <p>To provide Cabinet with information relating to the new Asset Management Framework for 2023-2026 that has been developed to guide decision making and clearly outline the strategic plans for the estate to 2026</p>	<p>11 July 2023:</p> <p><b>RESOLVED</b> that:</p> <p>(a) Cabinet approve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the new grants and amendments to existing grants at Appendix A and the required changes to the budgets.</li> <li>• the net re-profiling to the Capital Programme of £23.940 million from 2022-23 to 2023-24 to reflect expenditure levels in the financial year; and</li> </ul> <p>(b) Cabinet note:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A balanced position following a transfer of £5.916 million to the General Fund, after the transfers to Earmarked Reserves agreed as part of the Provisional Outturn report at the Cabinet meeting on 9 May 2023.</li> <li>• that this final outturn is based on the draft Statement of Accounts and is subject to external audit.</li> <li>• the delivery of the approved savings at Appendix B.</li> <li>• the use of the contingency shown at Appendix Q.</li> <li>• the use of reserves shown at Appendix R.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the virements requested by services shown at Appendix S.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Summary of New Capital Proposals considered by Officer Capital Strategy Group</b></p> <p>The report summarises proposed amendments to the Capital Programme considered by the officer Capital Strategy Group.</p>	<p>11 July 2023:</p> <p><b>RESOLVED</b> that:</p> <p>(a) Children’s Residential Homes:</p> <p>a) Cabinet approve the reallocation of capital funds of £1.260 million in 2023-24 from Black Close House to purchase six private residential properties which will support the development of multi-building children’s residential homes in Northumberland.</p> <p>b) Cabinet approve that delegated authority is given to the Executive Director for Children, Young People and Education to enter into a contract(s) for the acquired units as and when they are identified up to the approved budget limit.</p> <p>(b) BT Openreach Gainshare receipt</p> <p>a) Cabinet approve the receipt of BT Openreach gainshare funding amounting to £2.145 million.</p> <p>b) Cabinet approve the addition of £2.145 million to the Council’s capital expenditure budget in 2023-24 to be split as follows:</p> <p>i) Repayment to Building Digital UK (BDUK) of £0.989 million (46.11% of the total gainshare receipt) as per terms of the Contract; and,</p> <p>ii) £1.156 million into Community Broadband in respect of enabling additional premises to access the £2,500 top up voucher to help provide gigabit connectivity in the hardest to reach areas</p> <p>(c) Levelling Up Funding for Rapid Electric Vehicle (EV) Chargers:</p> <p>a) Cabinet approve the receipt of Levelling Up funding amounting to £0.453 million awarded to the Council for the provision of ten new rapid EV chargers to be delivered between April 2023 and March 2025, split as follows: £0.347 million in 2023-24; and, £0.106 million in 2024-25.</p> <p>b) Cabinet note the match funding NCC contribution of £0.050 million (10%) from the existing capital allocation in the Climate Change Capital Fund in 2024-25, creating a total budget of £0.503 million.</p> <p>(d) Alnwick Playhouse – Replacement of Lighting Rig:</p>

	<p>a) Cabinet approve the creation of a new capital project in 2023-24 for the installation of a new lighting rig at Alnwick Playhouse to ensure that the main auditorium is fully health and safety compliant.</p> <p>b) Cabinet approve the reallocation of capital funds of £0.100 million in 2023-24 from Ashington North East Quarter Redevelopment (Phase 2) to Alnwick Playhouse Lighting Rig to fund installation of the new rig.</p> <p>c) Cabinet note that the Strategic Regeneration Projects budget will reallocate £0.100 million to the Ashington North East Quarter Redevelopment (Phase 2) project in 2024-25.</p>
<p><b>Energising Blyth Programme: Levelling Up Deep Dive</b></p> <p>To update Cabinet regarding the establishment, development and delivery of the £20.71m Levelling Up Deep Dive (LUDD) funding awarded to Blyth earlier this year. The report explains how this funding will be added to the Energising Blyth programme in the town to have a catalytic impact on the town's economy and drive forward the implementation of the Blyth Town Investment Plan.</p> <p>This report seeks approval to accept this funding award from UK Government and to take a number of key early steps to enable the implementation of key projects</p>	<p>11 July 2023:</p> <p><b>RESOLVED</b> that:</p> <p>(a) Cabinet accept the award of £20.71m Levelling Up Deep Dive capital and revenue funding from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) and its use as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Add £19,630,000 to the Capital Programme as an identified budget allocation for the capital projects identified in this report.</li> <li>• Add £1,080,000 as an identified revenue budget for the revenue funded projects and programme management arrangements outlined in this report;</li> </ul> <p>(b) Cabinet note that the funding will be used to deliver new initiatives to support the delivery of the Blyth Town Investment Plan as part of the Energising Blyth Programme including 'Welcoming and Safe Blyth', 'Housing Renewal and Town Centre Living' and 'Energy Central Campus: Technical Training Kit';</p> <p>(c) Cabinet approve the associated financial profiles as set out in the report fully funded by the Levelling Up Deep Dive and agree to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish a new Blyth Empty Homes Team in 2023 for two years from appointment</li> <li>• Authorise the S151 officer in consultation with the Executive Director of Place and Regeneration to enter into internal grant funding agreement for the empty homes team revenue costs subject to confirmation of funding being in place and local assurance being followed</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Authorise the S151 officer in consultation with the Executive Director of Place and Regeneration to approve initial design fees up to the value of £1,993,469 across the programme</li> <li>• The associated programme management and assurance arrangements to support the programme's delivery as set out in the report. This includes the appointment of a Senior Programme Officer in 2023 to support the programme funded for two years from appointment drawn from the revenue budget above.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Environmental Enforcement Fixed Penalty Notice and Penalty Notice Policy 2023</b></p> <p>To present the revised Environmental Enforcement Fixed Penalty and Penalty Notice Policy 2023 for consideration and adoption.</p>	<p>11 July 2023:</p> <p><b>RESOLVED</b> that:</p> <p>(a) Cabinet agree and adopt the proposed policy; and</p> <p>(b) Cabinet agree and adopt the fine levels given in the schedule of the policy.</p>
<p><b>Drug and Alcohol Treatment and Recovery Service for Northumberland – Permission to Award Contract</b></p> <p>The purpose of this report is to provide the background to the need to provide a drug and alcohol treatment and recovery service as part of the Council's statutory public health functions, to confirm that the procurement exercise has commenced, and to seek permission to award the contract once the exercise is complete</p>	<p>11 July 2023:</p> <p><b>RESOLVED</b> that Cabinet approve the award of the contract to the successful contractor for £3,356,709 per annum. The maximum contract period is October 2023 – March 2030.</p>

## FORTHCOMING CABINET DECISIONS

<p><b>Outcomes of Statutory Consultation regarding School Reorganisation in the Berwick Partnership</b></p> <p>This report sets out an analysis of the representations and responses received from interested parties and stakeholders during the four-week statutory consultation, which commenced on 11 May and closed on 8 June 2023, in relation to proposals for schools in the Berwick Partnership. Cabinet is asked to make a final decision on whether or not to approve the proposals, including school closures, set out in the statutory proposal. At the same time, Cabinet is requested to make a final decision on whether or not to approve the non-statutory proposals relating to the voluntary schools within the Berwick Partnership as set out in the Report of the Executive Director of Adult Social Care and Children’s Services, Berwick Partnership Organisation – 9th May 2023. In making its final decision, Cabinet are advised to consider the decision of the DfE’s Regional Director of Education for the North East with respect to proposed changes to St Cuthbert’s Catholic First School and Berwick Academy.</p> <p>G. Renner Thompson/S. Aviston - (01670) 622281</p>	<p>20 July 2023 FACS 18 July 2023</p>
<p><b>Setting the Scope and Targets for the Climate Change Action Plan 2024-26</b></p> <p>To agree the scope and targets to be addressed in detail in the Council’s Climate Change Action Plan 2024-26.</p> <p>G. Sanderson/N. Johnston - 0447966334778</p>	<p>12 September 2023</p>
<p><b>Leisure Programme Update</b></p> <p>To update Cabinet with progress on the Leisure programme</p> <p>J. Watson/M. Donnelly 07517 553463</p>	<p>12 December 2023</p>
<p><b>Budget 2024-25 , Medium Term Financial Plan 2024-28 and 30 Year Business Plan for the Housing Revenue Account</b></p> <p>The report presents to Cabinet, the updated Budget 2024-25, Medium Term Financial Plan 2024-28 and 30 year Business plan for the Housing Revenue Account</p> <p>(R. Wearmouth/Alison Elsdon 01670 622168/07796652072)</p>	<p>16 January 2024 Council 17 January 2024 21 February 2024</p>
<p><b>Leisure Programme Update</b></p> <p>To update Cabinet with progress on the Leisure programme</p> <p>J. Watson/M. Donnelly 07517 553463</p>	<p>9 April 2024</p>

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Northumberland  
County Council

## Communities and Place OSC

# 'Improving Our Roads and Highways' Portfolio Update - Cllr John Riddle

26th July 2023

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

# Service Improvement Activity

The following service improvement areas are being progressed and offer an opportunity for Scrutiny to review progress & help inform decision making regarding next steps:-

- **'Fix My Streets Pro'** app to digitise service request/report handling and deliver step change in customer care
- **'Alloy'** asset and service management software for highways maintenance, tree management and Public Rights of Way Network. Used to digitise inspection, maintenance and service request processes and records and integrate with other systems
- **'Labman'** implementation of new digital laboratory management system for NCC Highways Laboratory to improve productivity, efficiency and income generation
- **Highway Maintenance – Enhanced Pothole Repair Pilot Scheme**, review of pilot scheme outcomes/performance and consideration of next steps
- **'Appyway'** Traffic regulations Orders for on-street parking restrictions migrating from the current text based system to a fully map based system to improve efficiency, user friendliness and to reduce legal challenges.

# Policy and Strategy

The following strategy and policy documents are due to be reviewed/refreshed/finalised over the next 6 to 12 month period and offer the opportunity for involvement by Scrutiny to help shape policy development:-

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- Local Cycling Walking Investment Plans (LCWIPs)
- Northumberland Road Safety Strategy
- Northumberland Network Management Plan
- Northumberland Rights of Way Improvement Plan
- North East Transport Plan (led by Transport North East with NCC input)

# Major Capital Projects & Programmes

The following programmes and projects are being progressed:

- Union Chain Bridge: Crossing Borders, Inspiring Communities
- Todstead Landslip
- LUF Sustainable Transport to Access Jobs - Active Travel schemes connecting Hexham to Corbridge and Bedlington to Bedlington Station and East Sleekburn
- Blyth to Bebside Cycle Corridor
- Local Transport Plan
- Car Parks Improvement Programme
- Public Conveniences Improvement Programme
- Electric Vehicle Charge Point Installation Programme
- Fleet Replacement Programme

Questions?



Northumberland  
County Council

# Communities and Place OSC - Portfolio Presentations

**Clr Colin Horncastle**

## Looking After Our Environment

6 months and beyond

# Headlines – Cllr Horncastle

## ...next 6 months & beyond

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1. Social Housing Regulation Bill
2. Biodiversity Net Gain
3. Local Nature Recovery Strategy
4. Design & maintenance of places
5. New approach to S106 schemes
6. Waste Management & Recycling



# Examples - Rob Murfin

## Biodiversity: UK is one of the world's most nature-depleted countries

© 11 October 2021 · Comments



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General News  
Feature Articles

GETTY IMAGES

The UK may be known for its green field data shows that it is actually one of the biodiversity is in the worst state.



### BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN

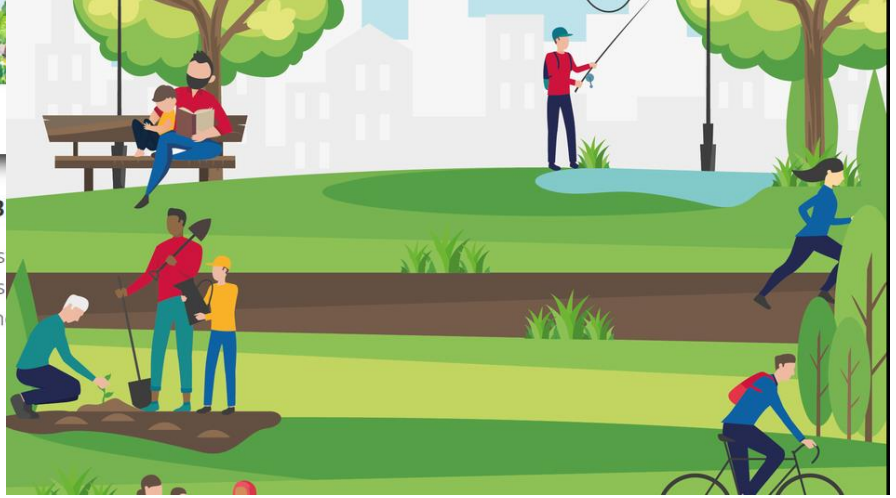
**WHAT IS IT?**  
Biodiversity net gain is the term used to describe the process of increasing the overall biodiversity value of a development site. The 'net gain' in particular means that the development site enhances the biodiversity value, rather than decreasing it. Biodiversity net gain can be achieved both onsite and offsite depending on a case by case basis.

**WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?**  
Biodiversity net gain has come into law to help preserve and protect key habitats going forward. By making BNG mandatory by law, the government can take vital steps to ensure habitats and environments are protected and nurtured for years to come.

**WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR ME?**  
The Environment Act dictates that almost all new developments must increase the biodiversity value of the site by 10% and landowners need to know how to do this.

LOGY BY DESIGN, CONTACT US,  
A RING ON 01865 893 346.

PRINCIPLES OF B  
biodiversity net gain s  
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passed the Environm



# Four basic types of activity...

- Preventing actions that could irreparably damage environment
- Doing things in a way that mitigates harm/improves environment
- Identifying locally based projects to enhance the environment
- Policy & strategy review, improving service performance and delivering major capital programmes & projects

## **Challenge:**

**All issues should demonstrate how we considered synergies**

# 1. Social Housing Regulation Bill

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- Improving energy efficiency of social homes
- Improving energy efficiency has important role in helping to reduce damp and mould in homes.
- Help tenants keep bills down, keep homes warmer and tackle climate change.

# Improving home & neighbourhood environments

## **Energy efficiency**

Achieving Energy Performance Certification (EPC) band C by 2030 may be made a requirement for all social landlords.

## **Green spaces**

Connections between green spaces and human wellbeing. Larger and better green spaces contribute to better air quality, more biodiversity, better summer cooling, flood attenuation and increased carbon sequestration.

## **Adaptation to climate change**

Responding and being resilient to climate change is in the Decent Homes review. Factors will include increasing overheating risk.

Explore role of PV roof tiles and another new products for retrofit and new build

# Ecological crisis point?

- Northumberland enviably rich in wildlife by English standards, but important habitats continue to decline in extent and quality and species continue to be lost.
- Biodiversity Intactness Index adopted by UN Convention on Biological Diversity = England has 7th lowest biodiversity intactness index of all 240 major countries. UK has poorest score of all G7 countries.
- UK 'State of Nature' 2019 lists "abundance indicator" for 214 priority species; fell by 60% between 1979 - 2016, and 22% between 2011 - 2016.
- 'Plant Atlas 2020' published March 2023, confirmed that since 1950s known range of 53% of native plant species has declined, with the decline being greatest among species associated with lowland farmland, wetlands and waterbodies.

## 2. Biodiversity Net Gain

- **Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is biggest ecological change in a generation**
- From November affects all significant planning applications
- Requires developers to demonstrate schemes will lead to **replacement with +10% net gain.**
- All habitat created or enhanced is managed for a period of at least 30 years.

- Does not use words like “should”

instead we can approve “***if, and only if***” *we are satisfied it delivers +10%*

# Northumberland implications

- 1,000-1,200 applications & sites effected **per year**
- Delay, cost, and uncertainty of land availability for habitat creation
- Defra's vagueness about commitment to BNG duties being '*fully funded*' will mean,

## ACTIONS

Initial information on our website, and this will be added to

- Developing Supplementary Guidance - what is required from applicants to help them prepare proposals

(Work held up by Government delays in making the Regulations and publishing the statutory guidance)

- We have ran sessions for Agents Forum and NALC
- Staff formal and local training has taken place
- Member Training will be provided

# 3. Local Nature Recovery Strategy

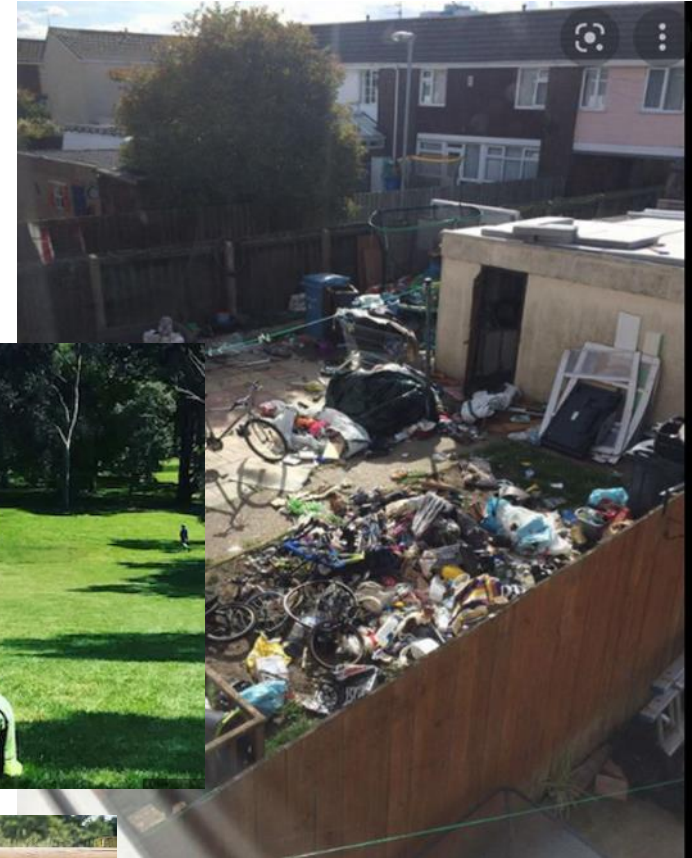
- NCC lead development of statutory North of Tyne Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS)
- NCC to be accountable body for Borderlands Local Investment in Natural Capital (LINC) programme
- Explore implications of ecological emergency to further strengthen the Council's commitment to rural stewardship & demonstrate significant role of nature recovery in mitigating climate emergency
- Develop response to ecological emergency using new obligations under Environment Act 2021;
  - development of a Local Nature Recovery Strategy;
  - strengthened duty to conserve and enhance biodiversity with a requirement to publish action plans and progress reports;
  - Linked to introduction biodiversity net gain via planning system.



# LNRS ... suggest issues for OSC

- **Must** work with partners when preparing strategy
- **Clear**, single vision for nature recovery with solutions
- Build and strengthen **local partnerships**
- **Involve** those who own & manage the land
  
- **Transparency** – show how contributions have been considered
- **Inclusivity** – enable everyone with an interest to be involved
- **Clear communication** – avoid using jargon

# 4. Design & maintenance of places



[Business](#) [Havering Council](#) [News](#)  
Man fined for messy garden.





# Headlines for 2023-34

- Full audit of Green/Open Space underway – so new Local Plan, investment and “S106” can be used locally
- Explore potential for pilot of new grounds maintenance regimes to support nature recovery.
- Local design guides to be developed with PCs/TCs input
- New enforcement strategy adopted, benefits of revised Environmental Enforcement Board to be explored
- Development of Street Scene Strategy to make our streets and open spaces cleaner, greener and safer.
- Review of Tree and Woodland Strategy and Tree Management Policy
- Major capital programmes:- QEII Commemoration Schemes & Parks Improvement Schemes

# 5. A totally new approach to S106 “asks” on way

## Local environmental improvements can include

- Provision/maintenance of flood prevention schemes
- Sport and recreation provision
- Open space + maintenance
- Community facilities & services;
- Measures to facilitate improvement in health/well-being
- Environmental improvement schemes
- Landscape improvement
- Restoration
- Mitigation of impact on designated habitats

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**Current consultation on replacement “tariff” based system**

# 6. Waste Management & Recycling

## Headlines for 2023-34

- **Hirst Project** – Improved containerisation of waste through provision of communal bin areas to remove the use of plastic sacks for collection of household waste.
- **Review of pilot schemes for kerbside glass recycling and food waste recycling** to inform design of new recycling new services in response to the Government Waste Strategy Review and Environment Act 2021.
- **Phased roll-out of new recycling services** - development of detailed business cases and service delivery proposals for roll-out of new kerbside recycling services for glass, mixed plastic packaging (pots, tubs and trays), cartons and food waste (subject to confirmation of funding arrangements by Government)
- **Review of HWRC service** in response to changes in the regulations and guidance regarding charges for DIY waste at Household Waste Recovery Centres

# 7. Coast and River Protection

## Policy & Strategy

- Review of 'Local Flood Risk Management Strategy'
- Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems for new developments, new legislative approach expected 2024

## Major capital programmes and projects:-

- Lynemouth Bay Waste Recovery Scheme
- Flood & Coastal Erosion Risk Management Programme
- Next Generation Flood Resilience Project

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# Questions





## COMMUNITIES AND PLACE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE DATE: 26th JULY 2023

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### UPDATE REPORT ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF A TREE MANAGEMENT POLICY

**Report of: Director of Environment and Transport, Paul Jones**

**Cabinet Member: Colin Horncastle, Looking After Our Environment**

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#### **Purpose of Report**

To inform this committee of progress on the development of a Tree Management Policy for the Council, outline the draft structure for that policy and enable committee members to make further suggestions regarding policy development.

#### **Recommendations**

It is recommended that the committee:

1. notes the progress made on developing a new Tree Management Policy.
2. consider the draft structure of the policy, provide feedback to officers on that structure, and make further suggestions for ideas that officers should consider going forward.

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

**‘Tackling Inequalities’** – the presence of urban trees within our towns and villages, and access to woodlands for leisure and to enable people to connect with nature, can have a positive impact on the health and well-being of our communities.

**‘Value for Money’** – it is important that our arrangements for the inspection, maintenance and management of trees and woodlands is periodically reviewed to ensure that it is proportionate and effective in managing the risks to public safety that some trees can pose, and that there is a clear policy framework to deal with service requests for maintenance works to trees.

#### **Key Issues**

- The key purpose of the Tree Management Policy will be to provide a balanced and proportionate framework that enables the County Council to effectively

manage the risks presented by trees in the Council's ownership, as well as those in private ownership that pose a safety risk to the public.

- It is imperative that we establish an accurate spatial record of all the trees (or groups of trees) that we are responsible for and know their current condition.
- Once we have a baseline of the number of trees we manage, we can effectively evaluate different proactive inspection models and identify if there are any resource implications against each potential approach to inspections.
- The policy will outline the Council's overall approach to tree management including how we will proactively inspect and manage trees on different categories of land.
- The policy will clearly state how we will respond to different types of requests for tree works, providing a clear understanding of what we will do, but also what we will not do and what the criteria for decision making is.
- The Tree Management Policy will be a key component of the broader Tree and Woodland Strategy.

## **Background**

- The review of the Council's Tree & Woodland Strategy has previously been undertaken by the Countryside Service, since the last review the County Council has declared a Climate Emergency and Trees and Woodlands have taken a more prominent role in supporting the Council's wider objectives, including its priority for tackling inequalities given the role that having access to trees and woodlands can play in improving the health and quality of life for communities.
- Given this along with colleagues working in the Climate Change and Great Northumberland Forest teams we have commissioned an assessment and review of NCC-woodland which will result in a Forestry professional working with the Countryside and Green Spaces Team to create a detailed overview of NCC woodland stock, through site-based visits. Once this is complete it will help us develop individual woodland management plans, it will also enable us to develop a more meaningful Tree and Woodland Strategy and provide the platform from which we will be able to apply for future grants aimed at bringing woodland into active management. It should be noted that plans are also being developed for replanting of NCC woodlands that were badly affected by Storm Arwen.
- Because of the longer timeframe for the review of the wider strategy we have begun a separate review of the Council's Tree Management Policy, which

provides the framework for how the Council responds to enquiries, and how we inspect and maintain trees we are responsible for.

- Prior to 2021 the County Council did not have a formal programme of proactive tree inspections, in 2021 a schedule was developed to ensure trees within or near to the following areas were inspected: Children’s play areas; roads around the school perimeters; key car parks; leisure centres; and key pedestrian routes through parks. All these areas have been inspected in the last 2 years and the next cycle of inspections has begun, this is positive progress but given the size and rurality of Northumberland there remain a large number of trees that are not captured on our spatial records and not routinely inspected.
- Work is underway to digitally map the location, height, and canopy extents for every tree 3 meters high or taller, utilising arial photographs and a technology company who specialise in providing accurate geospatial data. Once this data exists digitally, we will use it to update our asset register of the trees (or groups of trees) in the Council’s ownership and model a range of different inspection frequencies against the current inspection capacity and to identify what the resource requirement is against a number of potential inspection plans.
- Once the optimum inspection plan has been identified work can then begin to establish a condition survey for the trees and groups of trees we have decided to inspect, which in turn will identify a work plan for tree works required to address any risks identified.
- Earlier this year a neighbouring Local Authority was prosecuted by the Health and Safety Executive after admitting to failings that led to the devastating death of a young girl in 2020 caused by a falling tree in a school playground. During 2023 officers from that Local Authority have given their time to other Local Authority officers in the region, including Northumberland’s and shared the approach they took in their improvement journey following that tragic accident. This has been valuable in helping shape the structure for Northumberland’s Tree Management Policy.

## **Draft Outline of Policy Structure**

The proposed section headings for the Tree Policy are detailed below, along with an update on what will be covered under each section heading and the work being undertaken to help inform this.

### **1. Introduction and Summary.**

This section will give a brief introduction and summary of the key aims and purpose of the tree policy, what it covers and how it will be applied.

## **2. Legislative Framework**

This section of the policy will outline the legislation which is relevant to the Council's Tree Management Policies and the arboricultural works undertaken by NCC staff or contractors working on our behalf.

## **3. Policy Scope**

It is intended that the policy will apply to all trees under County Council ownership / management, regardless of their location, and to those trees in private ownership that pose a safety risk to the public.

However, under this policy there are currently 6 principal areas within the Council that have responsibility for managing trees on the land they are responsible for, these are:

- Neighbourhood Services
- Highways & Transport
- Property Services
- Planning Services (Tree Preservation Orders)
- Housing Services
- Individual Schools

In developing this policy, consideration will be given to the merits of maintaining existing departmental responsibilities and the merits of combining some or all those responsibilities into a more centralised model for managing the Council's tree stock.

## **4. Inspections and Proactive Maintenance**

This section will set out our tree inspection regime, risk assessment methodology and service standards and approach to maintenance.

We are currently reviewing how our tree inspections are undertaken and research is being conducted into the different industry standards for tree inspections to ensure the methodology for inspections is uniform across all Arboricultural staff at the Council, and provides a proportionate, priority-based approach to decision making around risk and maintenance requirements.

We are also commissioning work to map the location, height, and canopy extents for every tree 3 meters high or taller, we will then use the data to update our existing records of trees and to use this information to model a range of different inspection frequencies against the current inspection capacity and to identify what the resource requirement is against a number of potential inspection regimes.

Tree maintenance is currently mostly 'reactive' in nature and conducted in response to reports received by the council concerning specific trees. Some cyclical maintenance is already carried out, but in future a greater level of tree maintenance work will be conducted because of information gathered during proactive inspections.

## **5. Service Requests**

Reactionary maintenance will always form a key element of overall tree maintenance operations and normally originates from public requests for tree maintenance.

The policy will maintain our current approach to Priority 1 and Priority 2 works as follows.

**Priority 1** is categorised as 'Urgent public safety work', the target for completing the work is within 7 days.

**Priority 2** is categorised as 'Non urgent but essential safety work', the target for completing this work is within 12 months.

**Priority 3** work is categorised as 'non-essential but desirable work', this work is currently undertaken as resources allow. Our approach to Priority 3 works will be reviewed and this will be influenced by the resource requirements of the new inspection plan.

## **6. Publicising, Consulting and Engaging**

This section will outline when the Council undertakes tree works without communicating with others, in what circumstances we would inform local stakeholders about scheduled tree work and what circumstances would result in us consulting with local stakeholders before deciding on a course of action.

## **7. Trees on Private Land**

This section will set out our approach to trees on private land that pose a danger or obstruction to the Public Highway, and what discretionary powers are available to us in relation to trees on private land causing a danger to an area other than a public highway. It will also set out our approach to working with other landowners and stakeholders in relation to tree management.

## **8. Arboricultural Standards**

This section will set out the standards we will follow when undertaking tree maintenance and how we ensure the competency of our staff and our contractors.

## **9. Pest and Disease Monitoring**

This section will set out the precautions we follow to prevent or reduce the spread of pests, pathogens or invasive species and how we respond to issues.

A key issue presently is Ash Dieback, the inspection plan will be key to identifying the scale of the problem in Northumberland but work is already underway to do this, this includes the inspection work undertaken around children’s play areas; roads around the school perimeters; key car parks; leisure centres; and key pedestrian routes through parks and a formal Highways survey is underway on a number of A roads and one B road to identify the scale of Ash tree cover on those routes and its condition. From that survey we can identify the trees which require maintenance or felling and we can begin to develop estimates for the potential scale and cost of dealing with ash dieback in trees along our highway verges.

### **10. Damage to Private Property**

The presence of trees and their roots can damage property and this section will set out how the Council will respond to someone who perceives that their property is being damaged by a tree the Council are responsible for maintaining.

### **11. Planning Considerations**

This section will reflect existing planning policy around Tree Preservation Orders and Conservation Areas.

### **12. Statutory Undertakers**

This section will acknowledge there are organisations who have the legal right to undertake work on trees not in their ownership to help them maintain their assets.

### **13. Replanting**

This section will set out our approach to replanting in relation to trees felled under this policy.

### **Implications**

<b>Policy</b>	The report outlines the proposed ‘contents list’ and works being undertaken to support the development of a new tree management policy which will provide the framework for how the Council responds to enquiries, and how we inspect and maintain trees we are responsible for. The new tree management policy will sit alongside and inform the Council’s tree & woodland strategy.
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<b>Finance and value for money</b>	<p>There are no financial implications at this stage.</p> <p>Work to spatially map all of the trees which the Council is responsible for in order to review and model inspection regimes, as well as survey work to quantify the extent of ash trees suffering from more advanced stages of disease and which pose a public safety risk and need to be felled, will be used to identify any revenue budget pressures which will need to be considered by the Council when setting its budget in 2024/25.</p>
<b>Legal</b>	There are no direct legal implications.
<b>Procurement</b>	There are no procurement implications at this stage.
<b>Human Resources</b>	There are no HR implications at this stage.
<b>Property</b>	There are no property implications at this stage.
<b>Equalities</b> (Impact Assessment attached)  Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	There are no equalities issues at this stage.
<b>Risk Assessment</b>	The report outlines proposals to review the council's approach to managing public safety risks associated with trees.
<b>Crime &amp; Disorder</b>	There are no crime and disorder implications.
<b>Customer Consideration</b>	The report outlines proposals to review policy to provide clarity on how we will respond to different types of customer requests for tree works, providing a clear understanding of what we will do, but also what we will not do and what the criteria for decision making is.
<b>Carbon reduction</b>	There are no carbon reduction implications at this stage.

<b>Wards</b>	All Wards
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**Report sign off**

	Full Name of Officer
Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer	Stephen Gerrard
Executive Director of Resources and Transformation (S151 Officer)	Jan Willis
Executive Director of Place and Regeneration	Simon Neilson
Chief Executive	Helen Paterson
Portfolio Holder(s)	Colin Horncastle

**Author and Contact Details**

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Northumberland County Council

Communities and Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Work Programme 2023-2024

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Sean Nicholson: 01670 622605 – [Sean.Nicholson@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:Sean.Nicholson@northumberland.gov.uk)

Agenda Item 7

## 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

This will include work that the OSC can be more proactive in early stage development work in formulating new policies and strategies; to investigate matters of interest and concern to the wider community, and to keep under review the performance and financial position of the Council.

Northumberland County Council  
Communities and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2023-2024

**27 September 2023**

**Portfolio Presentations**

To receive an overview from the Portfolio Holders for Improving Our Roads and Highways, and Looking After Our Environment on forthcoming issues within their remits and to discuss with the Committee how they can collaborate to achieve the Council's priorities, including opportunities for pre-decision scrutiny where the OSC can be consulted at an early stage and monitoring the performance of its services.

**25 October 2023**

Page 57  
**Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Action Plan**  
**Social Housing**

To consider progress against the Action Plan following Cabinet's approval of the Strategy in March 2023.

To consider the implications of the new Social Housing Regulations.

**29 November 2023**

**Northumberland Destination Management Plan**

To examine and consider plans and initiatives to improve the visitor experience in Northumberland. (This report is prepared annually for Cabinet and therefore treated as post scrutiny so can be fluid in the programme).

**31 January 2024**

**Library Service Strategy 2021-26**

To update the Committee on the implementation of the Strategy.

**Active Northumberland Annual Outcome Report**

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

<b>28 February 2024</b>	
<b>27 March 2024</b>	
<b>Northumberland Infrastructure Funding Statement</b>	To consider the annual Infrastructure Funding Statement in respect of Section 106 Agreements
<b>24 April 2024</b>	

Northumberland County Council  
Communities and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee Monitoring Report 2023-2024

Ref	Date	Report	Decision	Outcome
1.	31 May 2023	<b>Fire and Rescue – Contamination</b>	<b>RESOLVED</b> that Cabinet be recommended to agree that financial support for the recommendations made by the fire and rescue service be provided to ensure that Northumberland was leading to reduce the risk of contamination and supporting fire and rescue personnel.	Recommendation was agreed by Cabinet on 11 July 2023.
2.	31 May 2023	<b>Food Waste Recycling Pilot</b>	<b>RESOLVED</b> that the presentation be received and food waste trial results to date be noted.	The OSC to receive further updates as appropriate.

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