



Northumberland

County Council

Your ref:

Our ref:

Enquiries to: Nichola Turnbull

Email: nichola.turnbull@northumberland.gov.uk

Tel direct: 01670 622617

Date: Tuesday, 19 September 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, 27 SEPTEMBER 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
- 8)

Minutes of the meeting of the Communities and Place OSC held on 26 July 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. 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 9
- 12)

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 Jeff Watson, Promoting Healthy Lives and Councillor Gordon Stewart, Portfolio Holder for Looking After Our Communities.

5. PORTFOLIO HOLDER PRESENTATIONS

To receive an overview from the Portfolio Holders for Promoting Healthy Lives, and Looking After Our Communities 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 Promoting Healthy Lives

(Pages
13 - 32)

5.2 Presentation by the Portfolio Holder for Looking After Our Communities

(Pages
33 - 40)

Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service Annual Performance Report

(Pages
41 - 64)

SCRUTINY

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

6. LGSCO PUBLIC INTEREST REPORT

(Pages
65 - 78)

A Public Interest Report has been issued by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) in relation to a complaint raised by a neighbour of residential property that was granted planning permission for a rear extension.

In accordance with Section 31(2) of the Local Government Act 1974, "The report shall be laid before the authority concerned and it shall be the duty of that authority to consider the report and, within the period of three months beginning with the date on which they received the report, or such

longer period as the Local Commissioner may agree in writing, to notify the Local Commissioner of the action which the authority have taken or propose to take.” Members are asked to consider recommendations made to rectify the situation in response to the Ombudsman’s findings.

REPORT OF THE SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATOR

7. COMMUNITIES AND PLACE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MONITORING REPORT (Pages 79 - 86)

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

Name:		Date of meeting:	
Meeting:			
Item to which your interest relates:			
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):			
Are you intending to withdraw from the meeting?		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
Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation	Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain. [Any unpaid directorship.]
Sponsorship	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.
Contracts	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.
Land and Property	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.
Licenses	Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the council for a month or longer
Corporate tenancies	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.
Securities	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"> i. the total nominal value of the securities* exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or 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.
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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, 26 July 2023 at 2.00 p.m.

PRESENT

Councillor N. Oliver
(Chair, in the Chair)

MEMBERS

Carr, D.	Gallacher, B.
Cartie, E.	Lang, J.
Castle, G.	Morphet, N.
Dale, A.	Reid, J.

CABINET MEMBERS

C. Horncastle	Looking After Our Environment
J. Riddle	Improving Our Roads and Highways
G. Sanderson	Leader of the Council

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

G. Gavin	Head of Neighbourhood Services
P Jones	Director of Environment and Transport
R. Murfin	Director of Housing and Planning
S. Nicholson	Scrutiny Co-Ordinator
N. Turnbull	Democratic Services Officer

7. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Mather.

8. MINUTES

In answer to a question, the Leader stated that there were a number of areas which the Administration were looking to expand and increase budgets which would be part of the budget setting process. Members who wished to suggest areas, such as pest control, would need to highlight them during the consultation.

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

9. FORWARD PLAN OF CABINET DECISIONS

The Committee considered the schedule of decisions made by Cabinet since the last meeting with the latest Forward Plan of key items (Schedule enclosed with the signed minutes).

The Chair reported that Cabinet had approved the committee's recommendation with regard to financial support to reduce the risk of contamination for fire and rescue personnel.

RESOLVED that the schedule of decisions made by Cabinet and the Forward Plan of key items be noted.

10. OVERVIEW

The Chair commented that the following presentations by officers and portfolio holders were to inform the committee of key works streams and projects that would be taking place in the areas within the next 6-12 months.

It was not intended therefore that the individual issues be discussed in detail but to gain an understanding and identify areas which should be scrutinised. The timing of when items should be included would be discussed after the meeting between officers and the Scrutiny Co-ordinator.

10.1 Presentation by the Portfolio Holder for Improving Our Roads and Highways

Councillor John Riddle, Portfolio Holder for Improving Our Roads and Highways commented on the improvements being achieved by the highways improvement programme. Progress was being made through the additional funds provided by the Council in addition to the standard Government funding. He was particularly delighted with the Fix My Streets and Alloy systems.

Paul Jones, Director of Environment and Transport, gave a presentation which outlined the following areas which were within the remit of the committee and potential items which could be reviewed:

- Service improvement activity
- Review and updating of strategy and policy documents
- Post project review of major capital projects and programmes which spanned multiple years, whether schemes had been delivered against the intentions identified at the outset in terms of time, cost, quality etc.

(A copy of the presentation is enclosed with the signed minutes.)

Issues raised by members included:

- The increased transparency and simplicity of Fix My Street was praised although several councilors queried the feedback to residents and terminology being used when items were 'closed'. It was noted that this was an evolving process to identify what could be improved including training for staff and updating the automated responses.
 - Requests for member training.
 - Dangerous / urgent items continued to be fixed promptly when reported by other means, eg email.
 - Whether information could be provided in response regarding road hierarchy and prioritisation of major roads over minor roads and the different response times. Responses should include information regarding the normal service standard for the category of repair. The amount of details in responses needed to be balanced and not deter individuals submitting reports. The initial large volume of requests following the launch and issues such as flooding could have had an impact on response times.
 - Observations on the system could be sent to the Director or portfolio holder.
 - Positive feedback had been received by councillors and residents with some items being actioned the same or following day.
 - The team involved in the implementation and use of the system be congratulated.
- Ensuring Northumberland received a fair share of funds via the North East Transport Plan.
- The route of the Blyth to Bebside Cycle Corridor. It would be desirable if the route avoided Cowpen Road, due to the noise and air pollution on the busy road, and linked with the Riverside route. The criteria for route selection normally required shortest most direct route. An update would be provided.
- Whether parking charges were to be introduced in coastal car parks. The Leader confirmed that this was not proposed.
- Those involved in the Electric Vehicle Installation Programme be congratulated for the success of the programme with very few problems.
- A maintenance programme for cycle routes including vegetation and condition of path surfaces was essential.
- Northumberland Road Safety Strategy, particularly cost of streetworks and whether these were comparable with other local authorities.
- Strengthening Northumberland Network Management Plan.
- Northumberland Rights of Way Improvement Plan
- Local Cycling Walking Investment Plans (LCWIPs) – scrutiny of routes not yet finalised (following receipt of government guidance on rural LCWIPs).

The Chair reminded members that the purpose of the presentations was to identify areas to be identified for inclusion in the work programme and not to discuss any workstreams or projects in detail.

RESOLVED that the items listed below be included within the Communities and Place Overview and Scrutiny work programme, following discussion

between the Scrutiny Co-ordinator and officers, to determine their inclusion at the most appropriate time to enable an effective contribution:

- Fix My Street (with links to Network Management Plan / road hierarchy)
- North East Transport Plan
- Local Cycling Walking Investment Plans – development of the programme
- Northumberland Road Safety Strategy – use of members scheme funds and costings.
- Northumberland Rights of Way Improvement Plan

10.2 Presentation by the Portfolio Holder for Looking After Our Environment

Councillor Colin Horncastle, Portfolio Holder for Looking After Our Environment explained that Councillor Glen Sanderson, Leader of the Council, was also in attendance as there was some overlap between their portfolios as Climate Change came under the Leader's portfolio. He praised the Executive Director for Place and Regeneration, Director of Environment and Transport, Director of Housing and Planning and Head of Neighbourhood Services for their knowledge and assistance.

The Leader reported that the environment was to be prioritised within mainstream work for the Council with the work of the Climate Change team being linked to the new environment first priorities. New policies and strategies were to be developed. Participation by all parties would contribute to the impact on the environment in the county and make the job easier for the Council as an enabler. They wanted to protect species and work with others, including farmers, to ensure rewards for environmental improvement were aligned as well as recognising food security.

Rob Murfin, Director of Planning and Housing and Paul Jones, Director of Environment and Transport, outlined the 4 different types of activity and key areas of work which could be scrutinised by the committee during 2023/24, under the following headings:

1. Social Housing Regulation Bill
2. Biodiversity Net Gain
3. Local Nature Recovery Strategy
4. Design and Maintenance of Places
5. New approach to Section 106 schemes
6. Waste Management and Recycling
7. Coast and River Protection

A copy of the presentation is enclosed with the signed minutes.

Members raised the following points:

- Clarification regarding the purpose of section 106 monies. These were to be used to alleviate the impact of a development. Whereas a tariff based

system would see communities benefitting from growth. The current model proposed that all developments would contribute to a central pot. All Town and Parish Council's would receive 15% of funds from development in their area or 25% if they had a made neighbourhood plan with identified actions which would be funded from the developer contributions. This could be scrutinised when the legislation and guidance was released.

- Maintenance of grass verges and large open spaces and use of planting in parks and open spaces. Whilst views varied, use of herbaceous plants in borders would require less maintenance. The committee could have input in the policy formulation as part of the review of grounds maintenance standards, regimes and where they were applied. The Head of Neighbourhood Services confirmed that the draft project plan proposed consultation with public, county councillors and town and parish councils and involvement by scrutiny. The Leader confirmed that there would be no changes to current practice until new policies were agreed.
- Investment in the South beach area. This had been included in the capital programme and was due to be carried out in Spring 2024. It was hoped that D-Day commemorations could be held at that location although planning was in the very early stages.
- Maintenance of trees and shrubs including liaison with external agencies and private landowners. More resource was needed. It was noted that Fix My Street could be used to report and monitor overhanging vegetation and the issue would also come within the review of Open Spaces. A decision to be made at a later date if further scrutiny was required. Reference was made to the exploration of an Environmental Enforcement Board within the 4th key area and possible involvement of members and member / community prioritisation to tackle untidy land.
- It was hoped that the provision of containers in the Hirst ward would reduce the amount of fly tipping in that area. The Head of Neighbourhood Services reported that the location and delivery of containers should be completed within the next 6-7 weeks. Phase 1 had been very successful, but residents were concerned that there could be loss of car parking spaces in phase 2 and officers were asked to liaise with wards councillors. It was suggested that cameras be used to monitor the areas during the initial period following installation.
- Whether the coastal mitigation levy included rivers and, if so, whether the levy should be applied across the whole of the county. The levy applied where it could be justified and went significantly inland and was based on evidence of visitors to the coast, but not the whole of the county. Some members felt that this was unfair and that it should be applied countywide. Current arrangements had been agreed with Natural England and enabled planning permissions to be granted in coastal areas with special designation to protect important breeding seabirds. It negated the need for all developers to demonstrate how they would mitigate the impact of their development individually with Natural England. The scheme had been in place for 3 years and was being replicated elsewhere. It was suggested there could be merit in an update report and review of progress. The Chair suggested that this was more appropriately reviewed by planning policy, the portfolio holder and members of the coastal communities.

- Review of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy and information about the pilot undertaken 3 years ago.
- The Leader awaited confirmation the NCC would be leading on rurality and the environment on behalf of the new combined authority. Part of south-east Northumberland was also rural.

The Leader suggested that it would be beneficial to have the committee's input, perhaps via a task and finish group, on policy around the environment and items to be included within the action plan by mid-September to identify recommendations for inclusion in the budget process.

RESOLVED that the items listed below be included within the Communities and Place Overview and Scrutiny work programme, following discussion between the Scrutiny Co-ordinator and officers, to determine their inclusion at the most appropriate time to enable an effective contribution :

- Social Housing Regulation Bill – update expected in October 2023
- New Section 106 system
- Green / Open spaces review
- Local Nature Reserve Strategy
- A task and finish group on the environment

11. UPDATE ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF A TREE MANAGEMENT POLICY

The Committee received an update on the development of a Tree Management policy for the Council. (A copy of the report is enclosed with the signed minutes).

Greg Gavin, Head of Neighbourhood Services, thanked members for the suggestions that had been made at the meeting in January 2023 which had been incorporated within the framework. He outlined the draft structure of the Tree Management Policy, which it was hoped had taken a balanced approach to manage the risks presented by trees within the Council's ownership and also those that were dangerous and in private ownership.

An accurate spatial digital record of the location of trees of 3 metres or more was being mapped to enable an inspection regime to be designed. Officers had liaised with colleagues at the neighbouring authority where there had been a tragic death of a school child from a fallen tree and the subsequent Health and Safety Executive investigation, to identify areas where improvements could be made, particularly around inspections. The committee were reminded that inspections at high-risk sites had commenced in 2021.

Responsibility for the maintenance of Council trees fell across a number of departments including neighbourhood services, highways, transport, property services, planning and housing as well as individual schools and this structure was to be reviewed. A decision on whether current resources for inspection and proactive maintenance were adequate could not be assessed until all options had been quantified and the survey completed.

The policy would also need to address how ad hoc requests from councillors and members of the public were responded to, following the setting of service standards to better manage expectations.

The following issues were raised by members:

- Concern was expressed regarding the scale and progression of Ash die back and the danger that these trees posed. It was suggested that some may have been identified by the highway's inspection vehicles with camera technology and should be dealt with before the survey of the county was completed.
- The scale of the task was massive but needed to be undertaken.
- Trees suffering from Ash die back needed to be prioritised. It was confirmed that inspections were being carried out at key sites such as streets near schools and key paths in parks and reference was made to a recent felling licence application for Plessey Woods. Sample checks were being carried out on key arterial routes to obtain a sense of the scale of the problem including the A69, A189, A68, A689 and the B road between Belsay and Morpeth and assess the scope of the works required on those routes before making rough calculations for the remainder of the county's arterial routes.
- Trees within or overhanging hedgerows would be surveyed, and a sensible approach would be adopted, although the exact distance had not been set.
- Whether a chapter would be included to reflect the Council's ambitions on climate change and the need to combat the ecological emergency. It was proposed that this would be included within the wider Tree and Woodland Strategy which was being developed with colleagues from the Great Northumberland Forest, the Climate Change team and other departments.
- Clarification was requested of the timescales of works identified as priority 1 or 2. Anything likely to fail imminently was categorised as priority 1 whereas priority 2 works would be required within the next 12 or so months, these were not at imminent risk of failure. No timescale could be assigned to priority 3 works.
- Trimming of tree branches was required around streetlights.
- There were some very large trees on housing estates which were encroaching on people's properties and impacted negatively on their perception of the tree which they had to live with every day. Whilst they might prefer for the tree to be removed entirely, other residents enjoyed them and wanted them to be retained. It was suggested that there needed to be a middle ground when some branches were trimmed or removed, particularly in urban environments. The policy needed to address the issue. It was confirmed that resources would be allocated to address any dangerous trees.

Members thanked the officers involved in the development of the Tree Management Policy.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) The progress made on developing the Tree Management Policy be noted.
- 2) The draft structure of the Tree Management Policy was supported with comments made as above.

12. 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 confirmed that he would liaise with the officers to ensure that the items identified within the presentations by the Portfolio Holders earlier in the meeting to ensure they were scheduled at the correct time for scrutiny to have an effective contribution to the final outcome. As a consequence, he cautioned that some of the items that had already been programmed might need to be reprioritised.

The Chair suggested that some items which had previously been considered at an earlier meeting with an update requested in 6 or 12 months, could perhaps be dealt with by way of a written report, rather than being rescrutinised.

The Scrutiny Co-ordinator referred to the leader's suggestion for an environment task and finish group and explained that the Committee would normally consider and agree a scoping report. However, given the timescale mentioned, it would not be possible for this to be done on a formal basis. He suggested that he liaise with officers to determine the terms of reference, which would be as per the discussion, to establish the task and finish group, and then contact all members for volunteers to participate.

RESOLVED that the work programme be noted.

CHAIR _____

DATE _____

Agenda Item 4

DECISIONS TAKEN BY CABINET SINCE LAST OSC MEETING AND FORTHCOMING CABINET DECISIONS - SEPTEMBER TO DECEMBER 2023

DECISION	CABINET DATE/DECISION
Cabinet Papers – 12 September	https://northumberland.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=140&MIId=2256
BEST: Delivery Partner Delegated Decision The report sought delegated authority for the Council’s Executive Director of Transformation and Resources to enter into a contract for the BEST Delivery Partner in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services.	12 September 2023 RESOLVED that the Executive Director of Transformation and Resources be authorised, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services, to enter into a contract for the BEST Delivery Partner.
Financial Performance 2023-24 – Position at the end of June 2023	To be considered by the CSEG OSC on 25 September 2023.
Loan to Whittingham, Callaly and Alnham Parish Council The report provided details of a potential loan facility to Whittingham, Callaly and Alnham Parish Council (WCAPC) of £4,435 towards the capital reserve.	12 September 2023 RESOLVED that Cabinet approve a loan facility of £4,435 to WCAPC subject to the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WCAPC agreeing to the proposed terms and conditions; and • NCC’s Legal Team completing a legal agreement with WCAPC in advance of any loan drawdown by WCAPC, containing the terms and conditions set out within the report.
Summary of New Capital Proposals considered by Officer Capital Strategy Group 1 Family Hub Grant	12 September 2023 RESOLVED that Cabinet: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Approve the receipt of the capital element of the Family Hub grant of £0.063 million in 2023-24 and £0.059 million in 2024-25 and update the capital programme; and b) Grant delegated authority for the Executive Director of Children, Education and Young people to enter into contracts for the appropriate items of capital expenditure as and when they are identified up to the approved total budget limited.

<p>2 Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management schemes</p> <p>3 Lilidorei Play Village – Additional funding from Department of Levelling Up, Communities and Housing (DLUCH)</p> <p>4 Levelling Up Funds – Hexham to Corbridge and Bedlington East to West</p> <p>5 Queen Elizabeth II Memorial Garden, Bedlington Cemetery</p> <p>6 Telecare Digital Switch</p>	<p>RESOLVED that Cabinet approve the updated expenditure of £0.118 million and the amendment of the budget allocations within the Capital Programme for Otterburn Surface Water Flood Alleviation Scheme and Red Row Surface Water Flood Alleviation Scheme.</p> <p>RESOLVED that Cabinet approve the inclusion of the £0.500 million funding already received from DLUCH and update the Capital Programme.</p> <p>RESOLVED that Cabinet:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Accept the funds from the Levelling up Fund Tranche 2 of £14.712 million; b) Approve funds in line with the costs outlined in the table set out in paragraph 9.5; and c) Approve the reallocation in the Capital Programme of £2.000 million from the existing allocation for Local Cycling and Walking Programme. <p>RESOLVED that Cabinet:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Approve capital expenditure totalling £0.043 million for improvements to the West Bedlington Cemetery Garden of Remembrance; and b) Approve the reallocation in the Capital Programme of £0.027 million from the existing Parks Enhancement Capital Programme and £0.017 million from Cllr Malcolm Robinson’s Members’ Local Improvement Scheme Funds. <p>RESOLVED that Cabinet approve the allocation of £0.547 million from the Adult Social Care Capital Grant in the Capital Programme to implement the capital project.</p>
<p>Additional Market Sustainability and Improvement Grant</p>	<p>RESOLVED that:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Cabinet endorse the overall approach to the use of the additional Market Sustainability and Improvement Fund (MSIF) set out in paragraphs 6.28 to 6.30 of the report; and b. the Executive Director for Adults, Ageing & Wellbeing be authorised to agree detailed allocations of expenditure within that overall approach, and to manage the overall resources available from the MSIF and the Adult Social Care Discharge fund flexibly to as to maximise the benefits for people with care and support needs, subject to consultation with the Cabinet Member for Caring for Adults, and the Executive Director of Transformation and Resources.

FORTHCOMING CABINET DECISIONS

<p>Data Academy Pilot</p> <p>Investing via levy funding to upskill Northumberland County Council with data skills with an initial pilot cohort of three potential courses ranging from academic level 3, 4, and 4-6 that relate to upskilling in data using monies from NCC's levy funding budget.</p> <p>R. Wearmouth/A. Kingham - 01670 622742</p>	<p>10 October 2023</p>
<p>Environment Policy Statement</p> <p>The report proposes the adoption of an overarching Environmental Policy Statement by Northumberland County Council to more clearly identify and communicate how the diverse range of environmental policy and service delivery activities undertaken by the Council are all part of its commitment to maintain, protect and enhance the environment. If the Environmental Policy Statement set out in the report is approved, it is intended that this will then be used to help support improved public awareness, engagement and active participation on environmental matters.</p> <p>G. Sanderson/ P. Jones - 0771 7714523</p>	<p>10 October 2023</p>
<p>Food & Feed, Safety & Standards Service Plan 2023/24</p> <p>The Purpose of this report is to present for its consideration and endorsement, the Food and Feed, Safety and Standards Service Plan for 2023/24</p> <p>G. Stewart/M. Mitchell - 01670 623796</p>	<p>10 October 2023</p>
<p>Setting the Scope and Targets for the Climate Change Action Plan 2024-26</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>10 October 2023</p>
<p>Strengthened Biodiversity Duty and Reporting Obligations</p> <p>The legal duty imposed on public bodies since 2006 to have regard to the purpose of conserving biodiversity has been significantly strengthened through a legislative amendment to a requirement to take action to conserve and enhance biodiversity, with a planning and reporting framework that has to be complied with. This report sets out the implications of this duty for the Council and sets out the actions that need to be taken over the next year to comply with it.</p>	<p>7 November 2023</p>

C. Horncastle/D. Feige - 0777 429 5253	
<p>Leisure Programme Update</p> <p>To update Cabinet with progress on the Leisure programme</p> <p>J. Watson/M. Donnelly 07517 553463</p>	12 December 2023
<p>Budget 2024-25 , Medium Term Financial Plan 2024-28 and 30 Year Business Plan for the Housing Revenue Account</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</p> <p>Council</p> <p>17 January 2024</p> <p>21 February 2024</p>
<p>Leisure Programme Update</p> <p>To update Cabinet with progress on the Leisure programme</p> <p>J. Watson/M. Donnelly 07517 553463</p>	9 April 2024



Northumberland
County Council

Communities and Place OSC

Councillor Jeff Watson
Portfolio – Promoting Healthy Lives

Archive Service
Library Service
Sports Development
Leisure
Culture and Tourism

www.northumberland.gov.uk

Archive Service (1)

- Work towards a long-term accommodation and repository storage solution for the Archive Service at Woodhorn and Berwick.
- Woodhorn - evaluation of strong room storage to understand how archival storage needs can be met over the longer term by existing on-site resource.
- Berwick - collaborate as an active member of the 'Living Barracks' project to realise the objective of the service relocating to the regenerated Barracks site in 2026.
- Engage with new and diverse audiences, including young people.
- Further development of the Archive Service educational offer - continuance of the successful 'Blyth to the Future' programme, extended across other communities across the county (Ashington).

Archive Service (2)

- Continue to work with the Northumberland Archives Charitable Trust (NACT) established in 2020 to explore grant funding streams to deliver archival projects which extend beyond core service delivery.
- Extend direct community links by creating and delivering a regular community activity and outreach programme.
- Creation and curation of exhibitions with varied and compelling content for the County Hall exhibition space, underpinned by a series of events and talks.
- Archive Service to begin service delivery in County Hall reception area 'study area', offering a regular timetable of in person officer resource and scheduled events.
- Understand customer demand across Archive Service points of delivery to ensure the service is meeting needs post pandemic and has an awareness of any changing customer requirements.

Library Service (1)

- New Public Library Strategy due for publication early 2024. Baroness Sanderson, Independent Chair of the advisory panel whose work will inform the new strategy, will report to Lord Parkinson, Libraries Minister, shortly.
- Library Service to review following publication of refreshed strategy, to ensure NCC delivers a Library Service which is relevant for 2024 and beyond.
- Expansion of 'blended working' pilot across Library Services and Customer Services, aimed at delivering an excellent in-person customer experience and achieving first point of contact resolution.
- Completion of the Mobile Library pilot, using the new resource which was deployed in June 2023. Analyse user feedback to shape the future service.

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Library Service (2)

- Develop the digital offer across Libraries, expanding reach to those who seek digital support to improve their wellbeing and life outcomes.
- Increase the range of digital services on offer by introducing improved printing facilities across the five hub libraries.
- Develop and implement a local 'Area Prospectus' for each Local Area Committee area, ensuring that the delivery of the Universal Library Offer is informed by local need and able to realise maximum benefits for the communities served.
- Continuance of the 'Warm Spaces' initiative across the Library Service, providing a warm, safe, and neutral space for anyone who needs it, with opportunities to join in Library events or the regular activities programme.

Leisure and Sports Development (1)

- The Council is repositioning the traditional leisure offer and is moving towards supporting and delivering services with a focus on active wellbeing. The newly defined strategic objectives inform a Service Specification (2024-2034) that clearly describes the Council's requirements, and ambitions, for the role of the County's Leisure facilities. The Strategic Objectives aim to reduce the inactivity gap and have a more physically active population.
- The provision of opportunities to engage in physical activity through the Leisure Centres is recognised as key driver in achieving the Council's corporate objective of tackling inequalities. This will be achieved through planning delivery and monitoring through an inequality lens, to improve equity in access to opportunities including that of sports development from grass roots to elite level sport across the county.

Leisure and Sports Development (2)

The key Strategic Objectives of the Leisure Service are:

- To increase physical activity participation in leisure services amongst all residents, with the demographics of service users being representative of the Northumberland population.
- To contribute towards closing the health inequalities gap in the county by increasing physical activity in leisure services for specific groups identified as inactive or at risk of poor health outcomes.
- To deliver, enable and promote specific mental and physical health, recovery and preventative interventions.
- To deliver high quality leisure facilities and services for physical activity and wellbeing.
- To ensure the leisure facilities deliver an improved social impact by contributing towards building stronger and more connected communities.

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Leisure and Sports Development (3)

- Northumberland were invited by Sport England / Football Foundation to apply for Playzone funding to create outdoor spaces, enabling increased activity levels across communities.
- 16 communities and viable sites were identified within the county, and local consortiums have been developed to engage with stakeholders as part of the design and delivery aspect.
- Playzone Portfolio 1 (six sites) - informal offer letters have been received from the Football Foundation to support the development of six Playzone sites in Northumberland during Spring 2024.
- Playzone Portfolio 2 (ten sites) – anticipating build Autumn 2024 subject to Football Foundation timescales.

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Leisure and Sports Development (4)

- The Sports Development Service will be reviewed during Autumn 2023 to ensure it can continue to meet the needs of the community, providing physical activity opportunities for everyone, and enabling positive health outcomes.

Visitor Economy Update (1)

- **Visitor Economy Growth** - Northumberland visitor economy has seen continued strong year-on-year growth and recorded the highest ever gross value of £1.169billion, supporting 14,683 jobs in most recent data from 2022 visits.
- 9.972 million people visited Northumberland, up 28% from 2021 but still 6.7% lower than pre-pandemic levels. Staying visitors account for 19% of visits but 67% of spend
- **Local Visitor Economy Partner (LVEP) Status** – Visit Northumberland confirmed as LVEP, one of first 15 nationally, in response to national review of Destination Management Organisations.
 - Greater coherence and strategic approach to destination management.
 - Official status as LVEP
 - Access to expert advice, dedicated toolkits and training programmes from VisitBritain/VisitEngland, including innovation, distribution, accessibility and sustainability to business support and marketing

Visitor Economy Update (2)

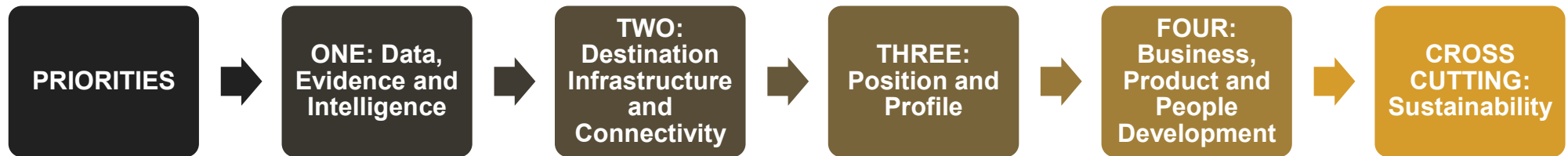
- **Destination Development Partnership (DDP)** - together with Newcastle Gateshead Initiative and Visit County Durham, Visit Northumberland form the DDP national pilot. The pilot provides the opportunity to prove the DDP concept and the impact the model can have on growing the visitor economy, strengthening the case for future funding and future national arrangements.
£2.5m of funding will develop the regional tourism eco-system including: skills co-ordination; sectoral business support; accessibility best practice; sustainability support; business events development; and product development
- **Destination Management Plan** - Visit Northumberland has overseen the creation, adoption and implementation of the Northumberland Destination Management Plan, and establishment of a public/private sector board to oversee its governance and delivery.

Visitor Economy Update (3)

Northumberland Destination Management Plan

- Developed by Visit Northumberland and key strategic partners – a 10-year vision of sustainable tourism development; monitored quarterly, reviewed annually.
- It is embedded with the strategic framework of all partners active in its development, its implementation and in the sustainable development of the visitor economy.
- Priorities identified and short, medium and long term actions taken forward by industry-led Action Planning Forum.
- DMP board oversee the annual review and refresh of the DMP.

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Visitor Economy Update (4)

Business Development

- **Visitor management** – support for ‘Love it Like its Yours’ summer visitor behaviour campaign, including water and fire safety, Holy Island crossing; business toolkit
- **Dark Skies Star Trails** – product development to improve the user experience for Northumberland’s Dark Skies, integrating events, accommodation and attractions
- **New Adventures** - product development and integration of active/outdoor, food and drink and seasonal products
- **Everybody Welcome** - five Visit Northumberland partners to feature in the North of Tyne funded accessibility programme delivered by NewcastleGateshead Initiative: Alnwick Garden; Bamburgh Castle; Northumberland College Zoo; Queen’s Hall Arts Centre; Woodhorn Museum.

Culture Update (1)

- **Development of new cultural attractions**

- The Maltings and the Barracks complex in Berwick
- Ad Gefrin Distillery and Visitor Centre
- Lilidorei at Alnwick Garden
- Blyth Cultural Hub

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- **Blyth Culture Placemaking programme**

£1.5m programme to raise the profile of culture led regeneration to compliment the new Culture Venue

- It will include an exciting new brand, name and website, artist commissions that are visible, assessable and engaging for local people and visitors to Blyth's town centre
- As Cinema is a key element of the new Venue, the focus of the programme is film, light, photography and words. These will be integrated into hoardings, streetscapes, interiors spaces, architectural lighting and impactful events.

Culture Update (2)

Berwick Culture and Creative Zone – Create Berwick

- The Cultural Investment Plan, informed by Advisory Group, to attract further funding (alongside £1.5m NTCA funding) was launched with cultural partners
- The programme will launch in October to raise the profile of opportunities for the sector, local people and businesses in Berwick town centre, and include activities such as: a large-scale annual commission, community radio, a resource hub, public realm design and a sector led training and skills programme

Hadrian's Wall Partnership

- Hadrian's Wall UNESCO World Heritage Site was formally adopted into NCC's cultural portfolio with an investment contribution that reflects its role as an international and national destination
- Hadrian's Wall 1900 yearlong event in 2022 – successful with 100s of events
- Community focused publication to celebrate
- Borderlands Hadrian's Wall Investment Programme; development underway

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Northumberland
County Council

Communities and Place OSC

Councillor Gordon Stewart
Portfolio - Looking After Our Communities

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Registration Service

- Implementation of the Medical Examiner Service on a statutory basis from April 2024. This will ensure that all deaths, whether natural cause or a matter for the coroner receive independent scrutiny.
- Benefit realisation exercise to be taken to understand the impact of the death notification service provided by 'Settld' on bereaved families.
- Continuance of advertising and promotional campaign for 'My Northumberland Wedding'. Building upon the reputation Northumberland has as an aspirational ceremony county and promoting the local economy.
- Work with local schools across the county to introduce a programme whereby school children have an opportunity to attend a British Citizenship ceremony and learn more about what citizenship means to their community and society.

Coroner Service

- Merger of North Northumberland and South Northumberland coroner areas to complete. The new jurisdiction will be known as 'Northumberland'. This will conclude April 2024, and is dependent upon the Parliamentary timetable.
- Changes applied to the Treasure Act 1996 which will broaden the definition of 'treasure' for the purpose of a coroner investigation and treasure inquest. Updated Code of Practice deployed from 30 July 2023 will impact upon the volume of treasure inquests.
- Implementation of the statutory Medical Examiner Service from April 2024.
- Negotiations with Northumbria NHS Trust regarding body storage, and associated pathology costs.
- Body removal and public health funeral tender for Northumberland County Council to be issued.

Fire & Rescue Directorate

Fire & Rescue Service

- Deliver Service improvements as outlined in our Continuous Improvement Plan
- Deliver the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) Risk Model for Dwelling Fires
- National Fire Standards Implementation
- Further develop our Community Risk and Response Operating Model
- Undertake a review of Response Standards for Northumberland

Civil Contingencies

- Work with the Local Resilience Forum to shape and deliver one of 8 national 'Stronger LRF' pilots
- Finalise the Council's business continuity policy and strategy, review the corporate BC plan
- Plan and deliver statutory multi-agency COMAH exercise
- Embed formal strategic and tactical response officer cadres in Council emergency activation and response
- Continue to work with NCT to deliver a County wide approach to Community Resilience
- Finalise a bespoke incident management system for use within NCC

Fire & Rescue Directorate

Public Protection

- Continue the work with His Majesty's Land Registry (HMLR) to transfer part of the work undertaken by the Land Charges team in Public Protection to HMLR, as required by the Infrastructure Act 2015
- The Food & Feed, Safety & Standards Service Plan 2023/24 has been completed and is starting the formal process to go through the Committee stages
- Monitor data, following the successful bid and receipt of a £33K grant from the Rural Payments Agency 16 new CCTV have been deployed in Blyth and Ashington to help support the council's overall initiative to tackle fly tipping in these 'hot spot' areas.
- First NCC Building Control surveyor has undertaken assessment to be competent under Building Safety Act, more to follow soon. The passing of this assessment is going to be legally required by April 2024
- Deliver against risk-based inspection plans for the service

Coroner Service Registration Service

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Fire & Rescue Directorate

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Northumberland County Council

Communities and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee

27 September 2023

Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service Annual Performance Report

Report of Councillor(s) Cllr Gordon Stewart, Cabinet Member for Looking After our Communities

Responsible Officer(s): Chief Fire Officer Graeme Binning

1. **Link to Key Priorities of the Corporate Plan**

Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service Annual Performance Report 2023-24 links closely to both achieving value for money and tackling inequalities priorities as detailed in the Corporate Plan.

Achieving value for money: Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service has a statutory responsibility to develop and publish a Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP), identifying fire and rescue related risks in Northumberland, and targeting resources effectively to prevent or mitigate those risks. With an aim to *'provide value for money through the provision of a lean, efficient and resilient service'* the Annual Performance Report 2023-24 ensures the Service achieves what it has set out in its plan. In addition, the Annual Performance Report provides an update on the Economic and Social Value of Fire and Rescue Services, which allows the Service to evaluate and understand the benefit and financial impact of its service delivery.

Tackling inequalities: Fire and rescue risk modelling indicates a strong correlation between fire-related incidents and deprivation. While the Community Risk Management Plan 2022-26 provides detail on how the Service works in partnership and collaboration to identify and address inequality, the Annual Performance Report 2023-24 provides assurance that the Service is monitoring progress against its priorities.

2. **Purpose of report**

To present Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service Annual Performance Report 2023-24

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 To note content of the report, and to provide additional challenge and scrutiny where required.

4. Forward plan date and reason for urgency if applicable

Not applicable.

5. Background

- 5.1 Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service has a Policy Risk and Performance Department providing data, analysis and risk modelling to direct policy development and to inform the delivery of organisational programmes and projects.
- 5.2 This department is responsible for the development and implementation of a Performance and Assurance Framework (PAF) and the coordination of inspections and reviews. It is the PAF that ensures the Fire Authority effectively discharges its duties under the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 and meets its responsibility as detailed in the Fire and Rescue Framework for England 2018.
- 5.3 The PAF measures performance across the four key areas of service provision, corporate health, priority programmes and risk. To further support monitoring, a suite of core and service measures have been developed. Core measures assist in the monitoring of strategic performance, specifically relating to statutory responsibilities. Service measures are more operational in nature and generally measure how the Service delivers against its priorities.
- 5.4 Detailed performance reports are presented to Directorate Management Team (DMT) monthly, and the PAF is overseen by a Strategic Performance Board (SPB) which meets quarterly and is chaired by the Chief Fire Officer. Additional scrutiny is provided by an Assurance and Challenge Panel chaired by the Cabinet Member for Community Services and Fire Authority Chair.
- 5.5 Reflecting the value of 'excellence' as set out in the Corporate Plan, the Annual Performance Report 2023-24 supports the underpinning narrative as follows:
- "We strive for the highest quality delivery of our services. This means being accountable for our actions and delivering on our commitments. We share and celebrate what works, are open and learn from what doesn't and take pride in continually improving."*
- 5.6 The Annual Performance Report 2023-24 is presented to Communities and Place Overview and Scrutiny Community for consideration and assurance, and thereafter an updated report will be presented annually in September of each year.
- 5.7 To ensure transparency, Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service Annual Performance Report 2023-24 will be published on www.northumberlandfireandrescue.gov.uk

6. Options open to the Council and reasons for the recommendations

- 6.1 Not applicable.

7. Implications

Policy	Not applicable.
Finance and value for money	Not applicable.
Legal	The report provides assurance that the Fire Authority is meeting its statutory responsibilities as set out in the National Fire and Rescue Framework for England (2018)
Procurement	Not applicable.
Human resources	Not applicable.
Property	Not applicable.
The Equalities Act: is a full impact assessment required and attached?	No - not required at this point Equality Impact Assessments are developed alongside any policy development implemented in response to performance outcomes and are therefore not required for the Annual Performance Report itself.
Risk assessment	The Annual Performance Report presents performance against the Community Risk Management Plan 2022-26 which is risk-based.
Crime and disorder	Deliberate primary and secondary fires are captured as core measures, with detail provided in the report.
Customer considerations	The Annual Performance Report presents performance against the Community Risk Management Plan 2022-26 which is risk-based and community focused.
Carbon reduction	Not applicable.
Health and wellbeing	Performance of the Safe and Wellbeing Programme is captured in the Annual Performance Report and is directly related to the health and wellbeing of our communities.
Wards	(All Wards);

8. Background papers

Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service Annual Performance Report 2023/24

9. Links to other key reports already published

Community Risk Management Plan 2022-26

10. Author and Contact Details

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Northumberland
Fire and Rescue Service



Annual Performance Report

2023/2024

1. FOREWORD

Welcome to Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service's first ever Annual Performance Report, reflecting on the performance of 2022/23 and looking forward to the priorities for 2023/24.

Following the publication of our Community Risk Management Plan 2022/26 we have been working hard to further develop and to embed our Performance and Assurance Framework. This affords us the opportunity to ensure we are delivering against our plan and to be certain that our Service remains intelligence led, and evidence based.

We now have a well-established Assurance and Challenge Panel, with members including the Fire Authority Chair, Deputy Chair, Shadow Chair and Chief Executive. We would like to thank all of our panel members for their robust challenge and ongoing support. This is an invaluable part of our drive for continuous improvement.



Graeme Binning, Chief Fire Officer

This year sees the Service undergo its third full inspection by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabularies and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) and we have welcomed



Gordon Stewart, Fire Authority Chair

the opportunity to demonstrate the journey we have been on, improvements we have already made, and the improvements we have planned for the coming year.

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08-14	Performance
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16	Priorities
17	Other Priorities
18	Glossary



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2. STATUTORY RESPONSIBILITIES

Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004. Under the Act, fire and rescue authorities must:

Promote fire safety, including the provision of information and publicity on how to prevent fires, and on the means of escape from buildings in case of fire.

Extinguish fires and protect life and property in the event of fires.

Rescue people and protect people from serious harm in the event of road traffic collisions.

When necessary, deal with emergencies other than fires and road traffic collisions.

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

The framework identifies five priorities for fire and rescue authorities:

To make appropriate provision for fire prevention and protection activities and response to fire and rescue related incidents.

To identify and assess the full range of foreseeable fire and rescue related risks their areas face.

To collaborate with emergency services and other local and national partners to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the service they provide.

To be accountable to communities for the service they provide.

To develop and maintain a workforce that is professional, resilient, skilled, flexible and diverse.

Fire and rescue authorities are required to produce an Integrated Risk Management Plan, now called a Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP), to inform communities on how it will deliver against these priorities. Our Community Risk Management Plan 2022-26 can be found [here](#).

To ensure we meet our statutory duties and responsibilities, we have developed a Performance and Assurance Framework (PAF), overseen by a Strategic Performance Board (SPB). The PAF provides robust governance and scrutiny arrangements and ensures openness, transparency, and a cyclical process of continuous improvement. Further detail can be found in our Policy Risk and Performance Strategy.

External assurance is provided by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS), undertaking independent inspections of all fire and rescue services in England. HMICFRS inspects the following:

Effectiveness: How effective is the fire and rescue service at keeping people safe and sound from fire and other emergencies?

Efficiency: How efficient is the fire and rescue service at keeping safe and secure from fire and other emergencies?

People: How well does the fire and rescue service look after its people?

Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) will be inspected from 29 May to 4 August 2023, with the final report published by the end of the year. All previous reports can be found [here](#).

Supporting Northumberland County Council's (NCC) vision of 'Northumberland: Land of Great Opportunities', we have a mission of 'Making Northumberland Safer'. This is underpinned by the following aims to:

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



Supporting a positive culture throughout the organisation, we promote the values of:

People First



We provide services to our people (residents, colleagues, members, partners, visitors and businesses) through lasting, genuine relationships that make a positive difference to their lives and their communities. We listen and understand our people's needs and put them at the heart of our decision making.

Excellence



We strive for the highest quality delivery of our services. This means being accountable for our actions and delivering on our commitments.

We share and celebrate what works, are open and learn from what doesn't and take pride in continually improving.

Respect



We are committed to building a trusting, caring and supportive environment for all our colleagues and communities. That means we are there for each other, act with empathy, value differences and encourage others to express themselves in order to collectively achieve our common goals. We treat others as they would wish to be treated.

Resilience



We have robust controls, practices and support in place to protect our residents, our colleagues and our communities and empower them to thrive and live well. We are committed to acting sustainably in order to drive the right impact, over the long term, whilst ensuring best value for money.

These values guide our behaviours and mould the culture of the organisation. It is widely accepted that culture affects performance; a positive culture is associated with high performing organisations. By supporting a positive culture through promoting these values we are facilitating continuous improvements in performance.

3. YOUR FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

The County of Northumberland

As detailed in Northumberland County Council Corporate Plan 2023/26, Northumberland is England's northernmost county.

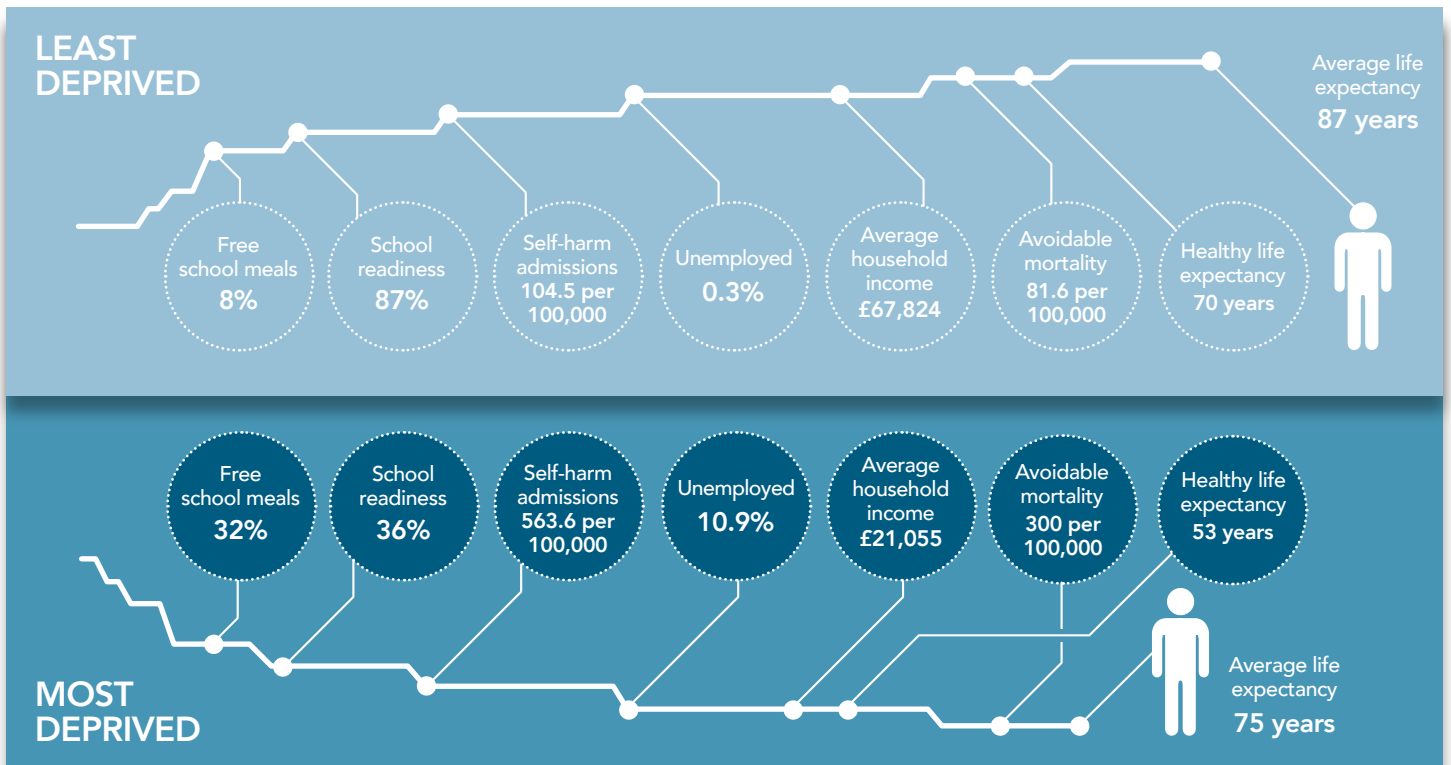
With an area of 5,013 km² and a population of 323,820, Northumberland is the sixth most sparsely populated county in England. 97% of Northumberland is classed as rural, with an average of 64 people per km². Over half the population live in only 3% of the land area, with the southeast of the county the most densely populated.

There are a number of challenges, specific to the county,

as approximately 12% of Northumberland's population live in one of the 10% most deprived areas of England. The county falls into one of the most deprived local authorities in England when considering employment.

In addition, Northumberland has an ageing population and by 2043, there is projected to be a significant increase in older age groups.

The difference between the most deprived and least deprived areas of the county is stark as shown below:



NFRS delivers a range of services to communities from its headquarters and from its community fire stations situated across the county as captured in the map below:



4. IDENTIFYING RISKS

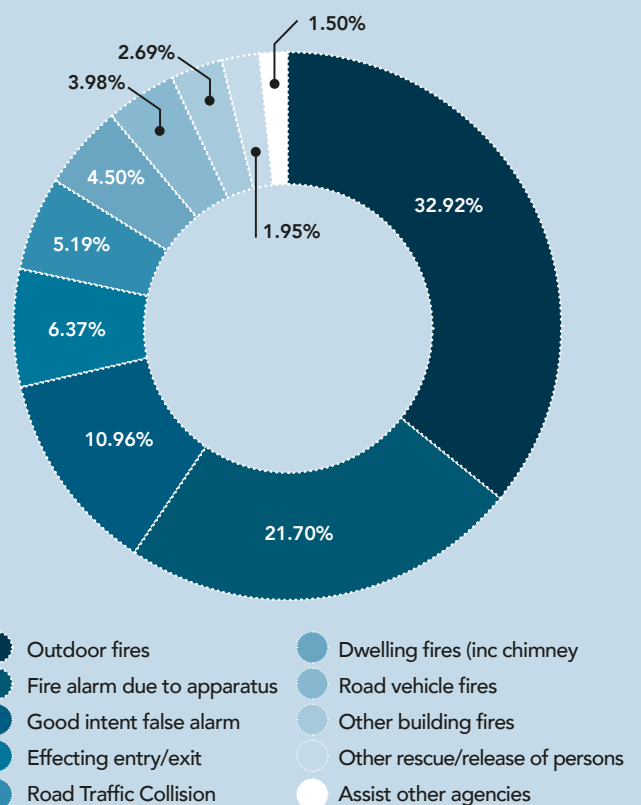
Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service defines risk as a 'combination of the likelihood and consequence of a hazardous event'. This supports the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) definition and strategic management framework.

In the case of fire and rescue related risks, the hazardous event is the emergency incidents we attend. We have a responsibility to our communities to identify what type of incidents we attend, and to work with our communities and key partners to prevent or minimise the likelihood of these happening or, where we cannot, reduce their impact.

Our incident profile for 2022/23 tells us that, over the last 10 years, the total number of incidents has increased by 25%. Fires have increased by 35%, False Alarms by 6% and Special Service Calls by 41%.

Although we attend around 30 different types of incidents, 10 of these account for 91% of all incidents.

These 10 are detailed in the chart as follows:



ACTIVITY 2022/2023



EMERGENCY CALLS
8,210



TOTAL INCIDENTS ATTENDED
3,797



FALSE ALARMS
1,278



FIRES
1,674



SPECIAL SERVICE CALLS
845



ROAD TRAFFIC COLLISIONS
197



RESCUES
277

Of note are the increase in the number of 'Effecting Entry/Exit' and 'Assist Other Agencies' incidents.

Effecting Entry/Exit

Throughout 2017/18 Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service participated in a scheme to support North East Ambulance Service (NEAS) to effect entry where people are trapped inside rooms or homes. Attendance to this incident type has continued, for a number of reasons, with 2022/23 seeing incidents increase to a total of 242.

Assist of Agencies

These incidents involve responding to support other agencies such as ambulance or police. Numbers dropped during 2019/20 and 2020/21 possibly due to the pandemic, however, although still relatively low at 57, numbers have started to increase. It is worth noting that 51% of these incidents involved bariatric patients. We will continue to monitor and analyse through the Performance and Assurance Framework.



5. PERFORMANCE

To measure performance effectively, the Service has developed a suite of core and service measures. Core Measures (CM) help the Service to assess how it is performing against its statutory responsibilities, whilst service measures are more operational in nature and often provide additional detail to ensure service delivery is evidence based.

Whilst the full breadth of performance is scrutinised monthly at Directorate Management Team (DMT)

meetings, core measures are reported to Strategic Performance Board (SPB) quarterly and by exception to Service Leadership Team (SLT). Additional scrutiny is provided by Assurance and Challenge Panel members quarterly.

With the purpose of developing a robust performance culture, a full year of data and analysis has been established for 2022-23 and presented below (*note: definitions are provided in the glossary on page 18*).

Prevention Core Measures

CM1: Total number of accidental dwelling fires

Performance has been excellent, with the total number of accidental dwelling fires standing at 124 for the full year. West Hartford and Pegswood station areas regularly record the highest number of this incident type, and it is therefore

pleasing to note that West Hartford recorded no accidental dwelling fires during the month of March. The Service continues to refine its Safe and Wellbeing Programme in order to further improve performance in this area.

124
Accidental
dwelling
fires

CM2: Total number of deliberate primary fires

Annual performance has generally been good, with a total of 128 deliberate primary fires in 2022-23. Only August reflected performance outside of target. Whilst West Hartford and Pegswood have seen the highest number of this incident type throughout the

year, Amble has also experienced 11 incidents. The Fire Investigation Manager continues to work with partners, including Northumbria Police, to ensure the organisation uses intelligence effectively to target interventions.

128
Deliberate
primary
fires

CM3: Total number of deliberate secondary fires

This measure is significantly outside target for the year, with a total of 950 incidents. Performance between September 2022 and March 2023 was either good or exceptional, however, performance between April and August 2022 was so poor that bringing the full year total within tolerance was always going to be a challenge. This incident type is often seasonal in nature; however, the Service continues to work with partners to identify individuals or groups most likely

to engage in firesetting behaviour. The Service is using this intelligence to inform service delivery.

One such example is the Extinguish Programme, which receives partner referrals for young people who have been setting fires. Significant work is currently being undertaken to provide additional analysis, quality assurance and evaluation of the programme to ascertain key outcomes.

950
Deliberate
secondary
fires

CM6: Total number of safeguarding referrals resulting in positive action

91.91 percent of safeguarding referrals submitted during 2022-23 have resulted in positive action. Outcomes can range from the implementation of a new care package through to formal safeguarding arrangements being instigated. Northumberland County Council Safeguarding Manager provides detailed feedback each month.



CM7: Total number of safe and wellbeing visits identified and delivered as a result of partner referrals

Partner referrals for safe and wellbeing visits are traditionally actioned by the Community Safety Department. Total numbers are outside target, and this is a direct result of capacity within the team, which has been sitting at around 50 percent for most of the year. However, additional analysis

indicates that around 79.17 percent of visits are with those who are defined as very high, high or medium risk when considering the likelihood of having a fire in the home. This provides assurance that referrals received from partners are indeed targeting those most at risk. Further work is being

undertaken with partners to ensure the most vulnerable are being referred. There is, therefore, an expectation that this percentage will begin to increase even further.



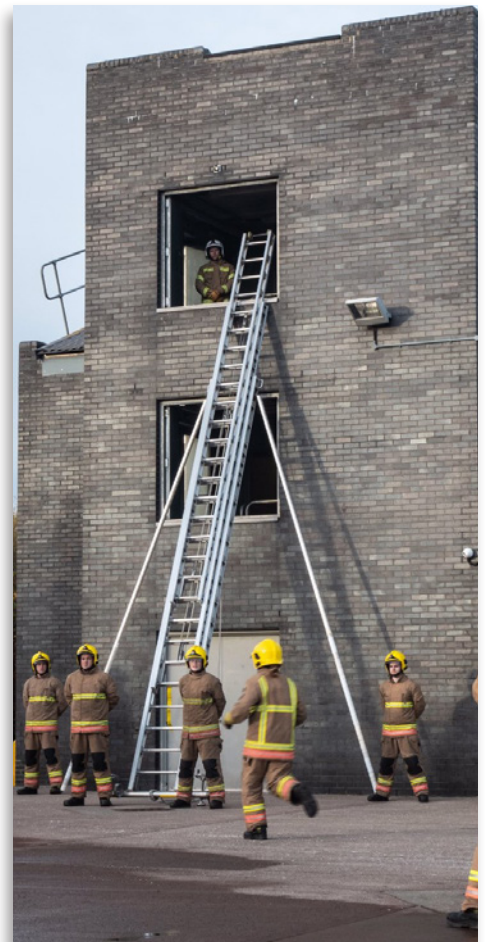
CM8: Total number of safe and wellbeing visits identified and delivered as a result of the risk modelling process



The Service has worked with a company called Operation Research in Health Ltd

(ORH) to develop a risk model. The purpose of this model is to identify those most likely to have a fire in the home, and therefore would assist the Service in effectively directing its resources. Traditionally, Community Risk and Response personnel have undertaken safe and wellbeing visits to homes identified through this risk modelling process. Total

numbers have remained outside target for the year, and the Service has been working to address this through the effective and efficient use of Support Officers. More significantly, additional analysis indicates that a relatively high proportion of those identified through the risk modelling process are classed as very low or low risk when considering the likelihood of fire. The Service is looking towards an intelligent use of risk modelling while increasing the number of partner referrals to ensure that targeting of resources is risk-based and effective.



Protection Core Measures

CM4: Fires in non-domestic properties

Performance for this incident type is well within expected variation for the year, with a total of 55 incidents. Analysis continues to inform delivery, with the Service contacting a responsible person within five working days of a fire occurring in a commercial property. Additional fire investigation training is

planned for both supervisory and middle managers across the organisation, and a full review of fire investigation provision is underway as part of a wider protection review. Other more proactive work is being undertaken, which includes liaison with HMP Northumberland to reduce the number of fires that occur there.



CM5: Automatic false alarms from non-domestic premises

Again, this incident type is well within expected variation for the year, with a total of 309 incidents occurring, predominantly in West Hartford, Pegswood and Hexham. The Service continues to work with businesses to support the reduction of false alarms, and where necessary will invoke the cost recovery process.



CM9: Overdue scheduled fire safety audits

There are currently 16 premises assessed as High Risk according to the Community Fire Risk Management Information System (CFRMIS). All of these are currently within the identified inspection frequency.



CM10: The outcome of fire safety inspections

This measure is within tolerance, at 97.3 percent. Of the total number, 492 received informal notifications, with 13 moving to formal action. Performance suggests that the risk-based inspection programme is effectively targeting premises most likely to have a fire and



enabling work to be undertaken to reduce risk.

CM11: The percentage of statutory fire safety consultations completed within 15 working days

This measure is within tolerance at 96.95 percent. The Service achieved 100 percent during 8 of the 12 months, which is a significant achievement.



Response Standards

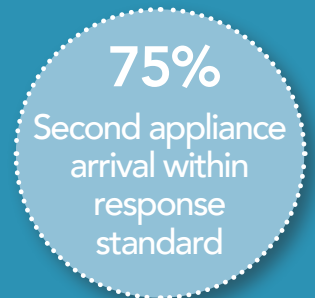
CM12: Percentage of occasions when the first appliance arrives at a property fire within the response standard (i.e. within 10 minutes of alerting on 80 per cent of occasions)

During 2022-23, the Service met the standard on 70 percent of occasions, or for 14 of the 20 incidents attended. This is below the target of 80 percent.



CM13: Percentage of occasions when the second appliance arrives at a property fire within the response standard (i.e. within 13 minutes of alerting on 80 per cent of occasions)

During 2022-23, the Service met the standard on 75 percent of occasions, or for 15 of the 20 incidents attended. This is below the target of 80 percent.



CM14: Percentage of occasions when the first appliance arrives at an RTC within the response standard (i.e. within 15 minutes of alerting on 80 percent of occasions)

During 2022-23, the Service met the standard on 81.82 percent of occasions, or 45 of 55 incidents attended. This is above the 80 percent target for the year.



CM15: Percentage of occasions when the second appliance arrives at an RTC within the response standard (i.e. within 20 minutes of alerting on 80 percent of occasions)

During 2022-23, the Service met the standard on 89.09 percent of occasions, or 49 of the 55 incidents attended. This is above the 80 percent target for the year.



Responding to emergency incidents in a large rural county such as Northumberland remains a challenge. However, the Service has a priority to 'Undertake a review of response standards for Northumberland', as detailed in the Community Risk Management Plan 2022-26.



Fire Control Response Standards

CM16: Emergency calls answered within standard

This is the time taken to answer 999 calls by Fire Control operators – within 10 seconds 95 percent of the time. During 2022-23 5,826 out of 6,015 or 96.86 percent of calls were answered within target. Further analysis of the 189 calls not answered within standard is being undertaken, alongside a review of staffing levels, recruitment, and the development of a competency framework.

96.86%
Emergency
Calls
Answered

CM17: Emergency calls mobilised within standard

This core measure considers the time taken between Fire Control receiving the emergency call and the correct community fire station being alerted, with a target of 90 seconds 100 percent of the time. During 2022-23 on 2,514 occasions (or 64.98 percent), the standard was achieved. Further analysis is already identifying key issues, and action taken is seeing an improvement in performance against this measure. For

instance, Fire Control operators work hard to ascertain as much information as possible before dispatching an appliance. Staff are now being supported to dispatch as early as is practicable with additional information forwarded when available. Individuals have been encouraged to listen to all previous calls where time taken has breached the 90 second target. This has led to significant improvement in individual performance.

64.98%
Emergency
Calls
Mobilised

Training Assurance and Safety Core Measures

CM18: Eligible operational staff successfully completing a fitness test

This measure has a target of 100 percent and is currently off target with 81.75 percent of operational personnel having completed and passed the current fitness assessment. 206 of 252 eligible staff have completed the assessment successfully. Note however that one third of those who have not yet undertaken their annual

fitness test are on long-term sick or modified duties. Some further discussion is required to determine whether these individuals should be considered as 'eligible' (and therefore included in this performance figure) as they are not undertaking their operational role and there is no risk to the organisation.

96.86%
Eligible staff
completing
fitness test

CM19: Eligible operational staff in qualification (breathing apparatus)

Breathing apparatus is within tolerance at 97.52 percent. 202 members of staff are within competency, with competency having expired for the remaining five members of staff who are based at Pegswood, Seahouses and West Hartford. Note however that, as with CM18 some further discussion is required

as there are some individuals included in this performance measure who are not undertaking their operational role due to various reasons and therefore perhaps should not be considered as 'eligible' (and therefore included in this performance figure).

97.52%
Breathing
apparatus

CM19: Eligible operational staff in qualification (Incident Command)

Incident Command is within tolerance at 95.45 percent. 110 members of staff are required to have competency in Incident Command. 105 are within competency, competency has expired for four, and one member of staff has failed

the assessment. As with fitness testing and breathing apparatus assessment, some further discussions are required to determine who should be considered as 'eligible'.

95.45%
Incident
Command

CM19: Eligible operational staff in qualification (driving)

Driving is within competency at 98.19 percent. 276 members of staff require competency, of which 275 have completed testing successfully, with one member of staff failing to pass the driving assessment.

98.19%
Driving

Human Resources

CM20: Percentage of shifts/days lost to sickness across all groups

Against a target of 3.5 percent, sickness reached a high of 6.92 percent in December 2022, falling to 5.86 percent in February of 2023.

Quarterly meetings have been arranged with Occupational Health, Principal Officers, and Human Resources to provide a detailed summary of reasons for absence. This will enable the identification of common areas for concern and allow the targeting of appropriate action if required.

4.99%
Shifts/days
lost to
sickness

Health and Safety

CM21: Percentage of RIDDOR events reported to HSE on time

Performance is at 100 percent against a target of 100 percent, based on two incidents being reported. Arrangements are in place for the Duty Manager, Health and Safety Coordinator and Health and Safety Administrator to consider RIDDOR implications for any incident requiring investigation.



Priority Programmes and Projects

CM22: Percentage of priority programmes and projects on track or within tolerances

All priority programmes and projects are monitored within the Service's Continuous Improvement Plan and updated monthly by the Continuous Improvement Manager in conjunction with senior officers. Performance is

within tolerance at 88.89 percent against a target of 90 percent. Of the 27 active projects, 24 are on target, one is within tolerance, and the remaining two are off target. Actions are in place to address performance.



6. PROGRESS

Our Community Risk Management Plan 2022/26 outlined six priorities for 2022/23. Progress against each of these is detailed below:

Deliver service improvements as outlined in our Continuous Improvement Plan.

The Service has a comprehensive Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP) detailing a suite of actions against HMICFRS Areas for Improvement, Community Risk Management Plan priorities, and priority programmes and projects. A Strategic Performance Board which monitors progress as part of the Service's Performance and Assurance Framework.

Progress: The Policy, Risk and Performance Department oversees progress against this priority. Working closely with senior officers, the Continuous Improvement and Inspection Manager ensures the CIP accurately captures progress against all actions. This is monitored through Performance and Assurance governance arrangements. As at the end of 2022/23, 88.89% of all programmes were either on track or within tolerance for completion.

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

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

Progress: The Service has undertaken an evaluation of its safe and wellbeing programme in terms of its partner referrals when compared with its risk profile. This is to ensure that we are working with the most vulnerable and targeting our resources effectively. Data cleansing and matching is now complete and ready for modelling, with delivery and evaluation taking place within the next few months.

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

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

Progress: Using the Fire Standards Implementation Tool for Protection, a comprehensive gap analysis has been completed. Actions have been identified to ensure compliance against the Fire Standard. Progress is monitored by the Fire Standards Steering Group, chaired by the Business Improvement Manager.

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

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

Progress: Using the Fire Standards Implementation Tool for Prevention; a comprehensive gap analysis has been completed. Actions have been identified to ensure compliance against the Fire Standard. Progress is monitored by the Fire Standards Steering Group, chaired by the Business Improvement Manager.

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

We will work in collaboration with Operational Research in Health Ltd to produce analysis of Community Risk and Response provision across Northumberland. This will allow the Service to assess the optimum distribution of our stations, fleet, equipment and specialist response to meet our risks, and will be used to inform our strategy for future estate and operational response procurement, provision, and resilience.

Progress: Data has been quality assured and shared with Operational Research in Health who have undertaken a robust risk modelling process. Outcomes of this modelling will be analysed by the Service and used to enable intelligence-led, evidence-based, decision-making regarding future community risk and response operating models. This will provide continued assurance that our communities receive a resilient service with regards to resources such as stations, shifts, appliances, and equipment.

Undertake a review of response standards for Northumberland.

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

Progress: The Service has undertaken research across the sector to inform our review of response standards and have established a cross-organisational working group. We will be working with Operational Research in Health Ltd in coming months in order to better understand the impact of any proposed changes to response standards.

Economic and Social Value of Fire and Rescue Services

As detailed in NCC Corporate Plan, it is important that the Service regularly reviews its service delivery when considering value for money principles.

As such NFRS is engaged with the Economic and Social Value

of the UK FRS project managed by NFCC. As part of this project, a toolkit has been developed by Nottingham Trent University to allow fire and rescue services to evaluate and understand the benefit and financial impact of their

activities. This provides support for their community risk management planning process and helps to inform resource allocation. NFRS has been selected to pilot this work.

7. PRIORITIES

Northumberland County Council priorities and outcomes are detailed in its Corporate Plan 2023/26. These are as follows:



Outcomes will be achieved through applying a Best Value Approach, through good governance and planning. While supporting Corporate Plan 2022-2026 priorities, the Service will continue to work on its priorities as outlined in its Community Risk Management Plan. Further detail is provided in our suite of supporting

strategies which can be accessed at: www.northumberlandfireandrescue.gov.uk/plans

While our current strategies run for three years in line with our Community Risk Management Plan, they are underpinned by annual operating plans which are monitored monthly and refreshed each year.



8. OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

Northumberland County Council priorities and outcomes are detailed in its Corporate Plan 2023/26. These are as follows:

- Introduced a Fire and Rescue Assurance and Challenge Panel, providing enhanced scrutiny arrangements.
- Embedded a Strategic Performance Board and refined our core and service measures.
- Introduced a Fire Standards Steering Group to oversee our holistic approach to national fire standards.
- Implemented Annual Operating Plans to monitor progress across all departments.
- Introduced development portfolios for crew, watch and station manager roles.
- Developed a talent management strategy to support career pathways.
- Improved quality assurance arrangements for Site Specific Risk Information (SSRI).
- Implemented quality assurance and evaluation for all prevention programmes.
- Increased the use of social media platforms to promote key messages.
- Increased the number of National Inter-Agency Liaison Officers (NILO).
- Invested in technology by submitting business cases for Learn-Pro and a Dynamic Mobilising Tool which will help to improve our response to risk.
- Improved our partnership and collaboration including membership on boards such as the Health and Wellbeing and Youth Justice Boards.
- Piloted a Level 2 Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion programme with comprehensive evaluation.
- Strengthened our Equality Impact Assessment process to support policy development.
- Reintroduced Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH) and National Examination Board in Occupational Safety and Health (NEBOSH) qualifications across the organisation.
- Introduced a Community Risk and Response Strategy to improve appliance availability, including the implementation of rolling recruitment, staffing clusters, and support officers.
- Introduced an Aerial Ladder Platform (ALP) to the operational fleet.
- Collaborated with Northumbria Police and Mountain Rescue on the purchase of a 6x6 off-road vehicle funded through the Northumberland Partnership Against Rural Crime.
- Introduced a drone capability into Community Risk and Response.
- Increased the cadre of station-based Level 3 Fire Safety Inspection Officers to deliver a greater number of Fire Safety Audits in Commercial premises.
- Developed a robust approach to firefighter safety when considering contaminants and toxins.

9. GLOSSARY

Term	Definition
Special Service Call	These incidents require the attendance of an appliance or officer. They include, but are not limited to local emergencies (e.g. road traffic collisions), major incidents (e.g., flooding), domestic incidents (e.g., persons locked in/out) and prior arrangements to attend or assist other agencies.
Bariatric	This document uses the term 'bariatric' to refer to individuals that have a body mass index (BMI) that is equal to or greater than 30.
Accidental dwelling fire	These are primary fires (generally more serious fires that harm people or cause damage to property) with a classification of dwelling and a cause of either 'accidental' or 'not known'.
Deliberate primary fire	These fires include primary fires (see above) where the cause is believed to be deliberate.
Deliberate secondary fire	These fires are classified as 'secondary' as they are usually smaller in nature and often involve rubbish, grass and woodland.
Extinguish Programme	This is a fire awareness programme designed to support and educate children and young people up to the age of 18 years old who may play with, or have a fascination with fire, inside or outside of the home, whether a one-off incident or repeat activity.
Safe and wellbeing visit	A safe and wellbeing visit takes place in domestic properties; the purpose of which is to identify risks to both the safety and wellbeing of the individuals residing in a property.
Fire in non-domestic properties	These are all fires in buildings not classed as dwellings. They are typically places that provide types of sleeping accommodation (including care homes), commercial properties or places that are open to the public.
Automatic false alarms from non-domestic premises	The Service is often notified of fires in response to automatic fire detection equipment alerting. If, after arrival and on investigation, there is no fire present, the incident is recorded as an automatic false alarm.
Fire Safety Inspection	This is an inspection of commercial premises to ensure compliance with fire safety legislation.
Appliance	Fire engine.
Response Standard	This is the maximum time it should take for a fire engine to arrive at the scene of an incident.
RIDDOR	Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013.
HSE	Health and Safety Executive.



 Northumberland
County Council

Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service

West Hartford Business Park

Cramlington

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Northumberland County Council

Communities and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee

27 SEPTEMBER 2023

LGSCO Public Interest Report

Report of Cabinet Member Colin Horncastle Looking after our Environment
Executive Director of Housing and Planning (Chief Planning Officer)

Purpose of report

A Public Interest Report has been issued by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) in relation to a complaint raised by a neighbour of residential property that was granted planning permission for a rear extension.

In accordance with Section 31(2) of the Local Government Act 1974, "*The report shall be laid before the authority concerned and it shall be the duty of that authority to consider the report and, within the period of three months beginning with the date on which they received the report, or such longer period as the Local Commissioner may agree in writing, to notify the Local Commissioner of the action which the authority have taken or propose to take.*" Members are asked to consider recommendations made to rectify the situation in response to the Ombudsman's findings.

In a letter dated 05/05/23, the LGSCO confirmed that the Council would:

- a) pay Mr X £300. This payment was to recognise that there would be some loss of his privacy, for his time and trouble in bringing his complaint to our attention, and the disappointment and frustration caused by what has happened. This was to happen within one month from the date of the Ombudsman's final decision;
- b) attempt to negotiate with the developer to improve screening on the balcony to reduce direct overlooking towards properties either side of the site. The Council Were to offer to pay for the cost of improvements to screening and other necessary works. This was to happen within three months from the date of the Ombudsman's final decision;
- c) decide what action, if any, was justified in relation to Mr X's planning enforcement allegations and to proceed without further delay. The Council were to inform Mr X of the outcome of its enforcement decision;
- d) review the use of standard paragraphs in case officer reports to ensure that site specific details and reasons are included. This was to happen within three

months from the date of the Ombudsman's final decision;

e) consider whether it had the staff to deliver an adequate service and that staff have the support necessary to carry out their work. This was to happen within three months from the date of the Ombudsman's final decision.

The Council were to report what had happened and the outcome of the agreed remedies to the relevant scrutiny committee, so it could have oversight of any changes that are made. This was to happen within one month from the date the Ombudsman informed the Council the remedy was satisfied.

The Council are to provide the Ombudsman with evidence it has complied with the above actions.

Recommendations

The Committee is recommended:

1. To receive the LGSCO's Public Interest report at Appendix A. The LGSCO has confirmed via email on 27th July 2023 that it is satisfied that the Council has completed all remedy actions as set out above, and that a report is to be considered by Members of Communities and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 27th September 2023.
2. To note that officers have acted on recommendations in the report in that:
 - a. Mr X has been sent a letter of apology and been paid the remedy of £300 in recognition of a degree of loss of his privacy, his time and trouble in bringing his complaint to our attention, and the disappointment and frustration caused by what has happened.
 - b. Discussed with the applicants the matter of attaching screening to the balcony, which has now been done. An offer of payment by the Council was made, however, the applicant had attached screening of their own volition;
 - c. Investigated the lack of response from enforcement and offered an apology for the delay. An enforcement officer met with the applicant to discuss the points of complaint made by Mr X around use of materials and concluded that whilst some materials used were slightly different to those approved, they were acceptable. Mr X was advised of this position;
 - d. Have reviewed the use of standard paragraphs within officer reports in line with the Ombudsman's recommendations and produced a revised procedure note;
 - e. Recruitment and Retention has been a significant concern within the Planning Department for a long period of time. Recently, we have successfully recruited into a number of posts which is envisaged will assist with high workloads.
3. To note revisions to the Council's policy as set out at Appendix B.
4. To consider whether any further internal scrutiny is required in relation to the handling of LGSCO findings.

Link to Corporate Plan

This report is relevant to the “living” priority in the Corporate Plan

Key issues

The LGSCO identified the following key issues with the Council’s report in this case.

1. The Council use standard paragraphs to state the impact on amenities is acceptable, but there were no case specific details to show how the judgement was made. This resulted in service failures.
2. The outcome of the appraisal of the application would have been different had the impact on privacy been properly considered.
3. Mr X’s property does not directly adjoin the application property, however, some loss of privacy still occurred.
4. The Council’s response to Mr X’s original complaint by the enforcement team is fault.
5. The Council should assess the potential harm of any breach of control before deciding what action to take in respect of the immediately adjoining neighbours.
6. The Council were not at fault in their publicity of the application.
7. The Council failed in uploading an officer report as soon as it was available, which was a service fault. This was rectified as soon as this fault was identified and a failsafe check introduced which was satisfactory.

With regard to point 1, changes have been made in relation to the use of standard paragraphs which offers clearer guidance to planning officers. It describes that any more detail needs to be provided to evidence the officer’s appraisal of an application and to demonstrate all components of a proposal have been considered.

With regard to points 2 and 3 it is accepted that the outcome may have been different had the balcony, in this case, been adequately assessed. It is unlikely that the balcony would not have been permissible, however, appropriate screening would need to have been included.

With regard to point 4, It is accepted that the enforcement team did not offer a timely response to Mr X’s complaint. The enforcement team has an incredibly high workload and operates to a level of high to low priorities in listing their responses. The issue of materials to the neighbouring extension, in this case, was listed as a low priority, hence the lengthy delay in responding. Notwithstanding this, it is equally acknowledged that even based on those standards, the response was unacceptably late. The enforcement team are working hard to ensure this does not happen again.

With regard to point 5, the enforcement team has considered this point and do not consider any breach of condition has occurred.

With regard to point 6, this is noted.

With regard to point 7, this was human error. Once a report has been completed and authorised, it is ready to upload to the public access system. On this occasion, the upload did not happen and was immediately uploaded once the fault had been identified.

Being involved in this analysis has directly reinforced with staff the need for timely, clear, consistent, and well-reasoned decisions.

Council systems and process having also been considered; a procedure note has been produced to offer guidance to officers when compiling their reports and the content they need to consider, and a failsafe check has been introduced that stops decision notices being issued without an officer report having been uploaded.

Background

A complaint was received from Mr X in relation to how the Council had considered a planning application at a neighbouring property, the impact of that decision on Mr X's privacy and the lack of notification of the proposed extension. This was responded to and escalated to the Council's 2-stage Corporate Complaint process on receipt of Mr X's second complaint. Mr X then escalated the matter to the LGSCO for independent consideration.

The LGSCO initially offered a draft finding in relation to this complaint on 27 February 2023, where they identified fault with the Council decision making and were likely to recommend that "there was service failure that caused an injustice that should be remedied."

The public interest report was published on 5 May 2023.

A copy of this report and the subsequent minutes will be provided to the LGSCO as evidence to conclude this matter.

Implications

Policy	There are no direct implications
Finance and value for money	Payment of £300 in financial to individual complainant.
Legal	There are no direct implications
Procurement	There are no direct implications
Human Resources	There are no direct implications
Property	There are no direct implications
Equalities (Impact Assessment attached)	There are no direct implications

Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	
Risk Assessment	
Crime & Disorder	There are no direct implications
Customer Consideration	Complaints are one of a range of methods by which the Local Authority receive feedback on the quality and consistency of our services. They are also invaluable for learning lessons and quality improvements.
Carbon reduction	There are no direct implications.
Health and Wellbeing	There are no direct implications.
Wards	All

Background papers:

Appendix A - LGSCO Public Report
Appendix B – Procedure note on report writing

Report sign off.

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

	Full Name of Officer
Monitoring Officer/Legal	Neil Masson obo Stephen Gerrard
Executive Director of Finance & S151 Officer	Jan Willis
Relevant Executive Director	Simon Neilson
Chief Executive	Dr Helen Paterson
Portfolio Holder(s)	Cllr Colin Horncastle

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5 May 2023

Complaint reference:
22 010 942

Complaint against:
Northumberland County Council

The Ombudsman's final decision

Summary: Mr X complained about the Council's decisions relating to development on land near his home. There was a service failure that caused some injustice to Mr X but potentially more to others who live closer to the development. We have made recommendations to remedy the injustice we found.

The complaint

1. Mr X complained about the Council's decision to grant planning permission for development including a dormer extension and balcony that affects his amenity on land near his home.
2. Mr X said the Council failed to:
 - properly consider the impact the development would have on its surroundings and so it approved an application that did not accord with planning policy;
 - notify him about planning applications;
 - upload the planning case officer's report to its website until a year after the decision was made; and
 - take enforcement action against the developer, after he complained that the colours of some building materials did not accord with details on approved plans.
3. Mr X would like the Council to compensate him for the impact the development has had on the value of his home.

The Ombudsman's role and powers

4. We investigate complaints of injustice caused by 'maladministration' and 'service failure'. Service failure can happen when an organisation fails to provide a service as it should have done because of circumstances outside its control. We do not need to show any blame, intent, flawed policy or process, or bad faith by an organisation to say service failure has occurred. (*Local Government Act 1974, sections 26(1), as amended*)
5. We may investigate matters coming to our attention during an investigation, if we consider that a member of the public who has not complained may have suffered an injustice as a result. (*Local Government Act 1974, section 26D and 34E, as amended*)

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6. If we are satisfied with an organisation's actions or proposed actions, we can complete our investigation and issue a decision statement. (*Local Government Act 1974, section 30(1B) and 34H(i), as amended*)

How I considered this complaint

7. I read the complaint and discussed it with Mr X. I read the Council's response to the complaint and considered supplementary planning guidance, the Council's Statement of Community Involvement, and documents from its planning files, including the plans and case officer reports. I considered photos sent by Mr X. I discussed what had happened with a Council planning manager.
8. I gave Mr X and the Council an opportunity to comment on earlier drafts of this decision. I considered the comments I received before making a final decision.

What I found

Planning law and guidance

9. Councils should approve planning applications that accord with policies in the local development plan, unless other material planning considerations indicate they should not.
10. Planning considerations include things like:
 - access to the highway;
 - protection of ecological and heritage assets; and
 - the impact on neighbouring amenity.
11. Planning considerations do not include things like:
 - views from a property;
 - the impact of development on property value; and
 - private rights and interests in land.
12. Councils may impose planning conditions to make development acceptable in planning terms. Conditions should be necessary, enforceable and reasonable in all other regards.
13. Regulations set out the minimum requirements for how councils publicise planning applications.
14. For major development applications, councils must publicise the application by:
 - a local newspaper advertisement; **and** either
 - a site notice; **or**
 - serving notice on adjoining owners or occupiers.
15. For all other applications, including minor developments, councils must publicise by either:
 - a site notice; **or**
 - serving notice on adjoining owners or occupiers.
16. As well as regulatory minimum requirements, councils must also produce a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). The SCI sets out the Council's policy on how it will communicate with the public when it carries out its functions.

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17. Not all planning decisions are made by council planning committees. Councils may delegate decisions to planning officers to make some decisions, restricted to circumstances set out in delegation schemes. Delegation schemes are found in a council's constitution.
 18. Decisions made by officers using delegated powers are controlled by the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014. The 2014 regulations require that certain decisions and their background papers are publicised on council websites, as soon as is practicable after the decision is made. The courts have decided the regulations apply to delegated planning application and planning enforcement decisions.

What happened

19. The Council granted planning permission for development on land near Mr X's home. About a year later, the Council received a revised plan, which added a small addition to the ground floor extension.
20. Mr X said the balcony impacts his privacy and other neighbours who live close to the site. He said the extension is large and overbearing on neighbours and in breach of policy on the local plan. Mr X said the Council had not consulted him about either application or put up a site notice to warn residents that a proposal had been submitted.
21. For each application, a planning case officer considered the application and wrote a report. The reports included:
 - a description of the proposal;
 - a summary of comments from the Council Ecologist;
 - a list of planning policy and guidance considered relevant;
 - some comments about the main planning considerations, including the principle of development, design issues, impact on amenity and ecology; and
 - the officer's recommendation to approve the application, subject to planning conditions.
22. The reports say that four neighbours were consulted by letter, but no comments were received. The Council provided me with details of neighbours consulted from its document management system. They were the properties either side and in front of the development site and do not include Mr X's address.
23. In relation to impact on amenity, both reports include a paragraph that says the development has been assessed against policy and considered acceptable. There is no mention of the balcony and how it might impact on neighbouring properties.
24. Mr X also complained about the Council's failure to investigate his allegations about breaches of planning control. This was because doors, windows, gutters, downpipes and cladding on the extension are black in colour, but on approved plans they are marked as white.
25. Mr X does not represent other individuals. He told me that the neighbour between him and the site has explained they do not want to be involved in the complaint.

The Council's response to my questions

26. After examining the plans and decisions, I wondered why the development had not been controlled by the Council to avoid direct overlooking. I spoke to a planning manager about what had happened.

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27. The planning manager explained the paragraphs in the reports that say the development was acceptable are standard paragraphs. They are used as part of a 'light touch' approach to householder applications to improve work throughput.
 28. The manager accepted that the balcony does directly overlook the properties either side of it. They said that balconies like this should be refused unless any adverse impact on privacy can be adequately resolved. The Council has previously allowed similar balconies by requiring higher balustrades and obscure glazed screens on elevations facing private garden space and habitable rooms. This is what they would have expected to happen here when the first application was considered and approved.
 29. When the second application was received, the manager explained that the principle of development for the balcony was already lawful, so it was only the new element, the increased size of the extension, that could be controlled.
 30. The manager said that while it was no excuse for what had happened, the planning department was and remains under significant pressure. They said that even very experienced and well-respected officers have made errors that they would not have expected in normal circumstances, but this was happening in a workplace where staff were often overwhelmed. The manager said the Council is trying hard to recruit and fill vacancies, but it is difficult to attract and keep the staff needed in the current job market.
 31. In relation to its failure to upload the second planning case officer report, the Council thinks this may be an oversight by an officer. It said, about a year ago, it brought in changes to allow for a second check by its Central Register Team, who now also check whether the upload was successful when completing the planning register of documents. The manager said that so far, the new system was working, and several upload errors had been corrected. The Council is still trying to determine why uploads occasionally fail.
 32. However, the missing case officer report had only been noticed when the Ombudsman had first asked for a copy of it, at which point it was uploaded.
 33. The Council said it did not investigate Mr X's enforcement allegation within its published time targets. Its enforcement officer has recently begun an investigation.

The impact on Mr X and others

34. The approved plans show a low stainless-steel and clear glass balustrade around the edge of the balcony.
35. Mr X does not share a boundary with the development site - there is another property in between. The boundary of Mr X's home is more than 20 metres from the extension and balcony. He sent me photos taken from his rear garden towards the site.
36. Mr X has two private areas which are not affected by overlooking, one behind a single storey outrigger to the main part of his home, and another behind an outbuilding. There is a gap between the outbuilding and his home. Part of the gap is filled by a hedge which is trimmed to about 2 metres in height at the moment. From the photo, it seems likely that a person sitting or standing on the balcony would be able to see over the hedge, through the gap into the central part of Mr X's garden.

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37. One photo Mr X provided shows how the balcony impacts his neighbour – it gives direct views over their entire garden. Residents either side and directly adjacent to the site are likely to be more affected.
38. Mr X said that any apology from the Council would be meaningless as, in his view, it has done everything it could to thwart his own investigation into what had happened.

My findings

39. The case officer reports use standard paragraphs to state the impact on amenities is acceptable, but there is no case specific detail that shows why or how this judgement was made. Without some detail, albeit briefly stated, we cannot know that key planning issues were considered before the decisions were made. This is a result of service failures.
40. But for the service failure in relation to the first approval, I consider it likely that the outcome would have been different. The Council would either have refused this application or required a condition to protect privacy in areas either side of the site.
41. The greatest impact is on the neighbours directly either side of the site, who are closer to the balcony and more exposed to overlooking. The impact on Mr X is much less significant, but there is some injustice caused to him. The development is too far away from Mr X to have an overbearing impact on him. The outrigger and outbuilding afford protection to private spaces in his garden, but there is some loss of privacy through the gap between them. He is also clearly frustrated and disappointed by what has happened. Even though the impact on his privacy is much less than it is on his neighbours, he would be in a better position if the original application had been properly considered.
42. The delay in assessing and deciding Mr X's planning enforcement allegations is fault. However, I am not persuaded that Mr X is caused a significant injustice by any failure there may be in controlling the colour of some of the building materials. Despite this, Mr X has made an allegation that has not yet been determined, and this is likely to cause frustration. The Council should make its decision without further delay and inform Mr X of the outcome.
43. There may be a greater impact on neighbours who live adjacent to the site, and the Council should assess the potential harm of any breach of control before deciding what action, if any, is justified.
44. I find no evidence of service failure in relation to planning application publicity requirements for either application. The Council sent me a screenshot from its document management system showing addresses of neighbours who were sent notification letters. The list does not include Mr X's address. The Council was not required, either by regulation or policy, to put up a site notice or send a notification to Mr X.
45. The Council did not upload the second case officer report soon after the decision was made. This is a service failure. The Council has since made changes to rectify this problem. It has changed its system to build in a failsafe check and I am satisfied it is continuing its efforts to resolve the problem. This is a satisfactory outcome. The second report was uploaded, and there is no outstanding injustice to remedy.

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46. However, I made recommendations to remedy injustice caused by the service failure I have found in relation to lack of evidence of consideration of key planning issues.
 47. I also recommended a payment to Mr X to recognise the injustice caused by the service failures I found. Mr X may, if he chooses, use the payment or part of it towards buying more screening, trellis, or planting to fill the gap between his outbuilding and home.
 48. The Council agreed to carry out my recommendations.

Agreed action

49. To remedy the injustice caused by the service failure I have found, the Council has agreed to the following actions. The Council will:
 - a) pay Mr X £300. This payment is to recognise that there will be some loss of his privacy, his time and trouble in bringing his complaint to our attention, and the disappointment and frustration caused by what has happened. This should happen within one month from the date of our final decision;
 - b) attempt to negotiate with the developer to improve screening on the balcony to reduce direct overlooking towards properties either side of the site. The Council should offer to pay for the cost of improvements to screening and other necessary works. This should happen within three months from the date of our final decision;
 - c) decide what action, if any, is justified in relation to Mr X's planning enforcement allegations and proceed without further delay. The Council should inform Mr X of the outcome of its enforcement decision;
 - d) review the use of standard paragraphs in case officer reports to ensure that site specific details and reasons are included. This should happen within three months from the date of our final decision;
 - e) consider whether it has the staff to deliver an adequate service and that staff have the support necessary to carry out their work. This should happen within three months from the date of our final decision.
50. The Council will report what has happened and the outcome of the agreed remedies to the relevant scrutiny committee, so it can have oversight of any changes that are made. This should happen within one month from the date we inform the Council the remedy is satisfied.
51. The Council will provide us with evidence it has complied with the above actions.

Final decision

52. There was service failure that caused an injustice that should be remedied. I have completed my investigation because the Council accepted my recommendations.

Investigator's decision on behalf of the Ombudsman

Appendix B

Procedure Note - Householder Applications

Following the outcome of a recent Ombudsman case where we were found at fault, we were required to review the use of standard paragraphs in case officer reports to ensure that site specific details and reasons are included. The procedure note therefore identifies those actions and how we need to embed them into our reports. The Ombudsman case was in response to a householder application, however, it is good practice to use this across all reports.

In this case, the issue of concern was a rear extension but, more predominantly, a rather large balcony. This had not been referred to at all in the officer report. The complainant also had concern with the fact he was not consulted, however, we were not found at fault on that point as he lived two doors away and the Ombudsman considered that we had fulfilled our legislative duty.

The Ombudsman concluded that there was no way of knowing that the balcony and its impact had been considered in light of it not being mentioned in the officer report. We argued that householder reports are very light touch and only address any parts of the proposal that have been highlighted in objections or could be seen as an issue, but this was not accepted. The Ombudsman required that within three months of his decision, we were to review the use of standard paragraphs in case officer reports to ensure that site specific details and reasons are included.

The procedure note below therefore address this point and should be noted by **all** officers. Although this is specifically directed at householder reports, it should be incorporated into all reports containing an appraisal of a planning application.

Householder Officer Report Procedure Note:

Householder officer reports should be light touch and be kept simple and concise. They must, however, include the following as standard:

- All relevant Local Plan policies
- All relevant Neighbourhood Plan policies
- A summary of any objections received
- The Appraisal element of the report should contain short paragraphs on:
 - Principle of Development (including Green Belt, Open Countryside, AONB, Conservation Area etc)
 - Design and visual impact
 - Impact on residential amenity
 - Highways and Parking (where applicable)
 - Ecology (where applicable)

- Listed Buildings (where applicable)

- The objections should be addressed within the appraisal section along with any other notable matters of interest, and which policies they are to be considered against. Some commentary should be provided as to whether the objections are material planning considerations and if/how any impacts can be mitigated

The conclusion should state that all representations have been considered and the proposal assessed against national and local plan policy to form a recommendation of approval/refusal.

Northumberland County Council

Communities and Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Work Programme 2023-2024

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. Issues identified by the Committee for inclusion on the work programme are:

- North East Transport Plan

- Local Cycling Walking Investment Plans – development of the programme
- Northumberland Road Safety Strategy – use of members scheme funds and costings.
- Northumberland Rights of Way Improvement Plan
- New Section 106 system
- Green / Open spaces review
- Local Nature Reserve Strategy

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

25 October 2023

Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Action Plan

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

Fix My Street

To update members on the implementation of Fix My Street.

29 November 2023

Social Housing

To consider the implications of the new Social Housing Regulations.

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.

28 February 2024

27 March 2024	
Northumberland Infrastructure Funding Statement	To consider the annual Infrastructure Funding Statement in respect of Section 106 Agreements
24 April 2024	

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

Ref	Date	Report	Decision	Outcome
1.	31 May 2023	Fire and Rescue – Contamination	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.	Recommendation was agreed by Cabinet on 11 July 2023.
2.	31 May 2023	Food Waste Recycling Pilot	RESOLVED that the presentation be received and food waste trial results to date be noted.	The OSC to receive further updates as appropriate.
3.	27 July 2023	Presentation by the Portfolio Holder for Improving Our Roads and Highways	RESOLVED that the items listed below be included within the Communities and Place Overview and Scrutiny work programme, following discussion between the Scrutiny Co-ordinator and officers, to determine their inclusion at the most appropriate time to enable an effective contribution: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fix My Street (with links to Network Management Plan / road hierarchy) • North East Transport Plan • Local Cycling Walking Investment Plans – development of the programme • Northumberland Road Safety Strategy – use of members scheme funds and costings. • Northumberland Rights of Way Improvement Plan 	The issues identified by the Committee will be integrated into the work programme.
4.	27 July 2023	Presentation by the Portfolio Holder for Looking After Our Environment	RESOLVED that the items listed below be included within the Communities and Place Overview and Scrutiny work programme, following discussion between the Scrutiny Co-ordinator and officers, to determine their inclusion at the most appropriate time to enable an effective contribution:	The issues identified by the Committee will be integrated into the work programme.

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Housing Regulation Bill • New Section 106 system • Green / Open spaces review • Local Nature Reserve Strategy • A task and finish group on the environment 	
5.	27 July 2023	Update on the Development of a Tree Management Policy	<p>RESOLVED that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The progress made on developing the Tree Management Policy be noted. 2. The draft structure of the Tree Management Policy was supported with comments made as above. 	The Committee will continue to monitor this issue as appropriate.