



Northumberland

County Council

Your ref:

Our ref:

Enquiries to: Rebecca Greally

Email:

democraticservices@northumberland.gov.uk

Tel direct: 01670 622616

Date: Friday, 15 September 2023

Dear Sir or Madam,

Your attendance is requested at a meeting of the **CORPORATE SERVICES AND ECONOMIC GROWTH OSC** to be held in **CONFERENCE ROOM 1, COUNTY HALL, MORPETH, NORTHUMBERLAND, NE61 2EF** on **MONDAY, 25 SEPTEMBER 2023** at **10.00 AM**.

Yours faithfully

Dr Helen Paterson
Chief Executive

To Corporate Services and Economic Growth OSC members as follows:-

D Bawn (Chair), J Beynon, L Dunn (Vice-Chair), P Jackson, N Oliver, A Wallace, C Taylor, M Robinson, P Ezhilchelvan and L Grimshaw

Portfolio Holders:

Councillors C Horncastle, W Ploszaj and R Wearmouth



Dr Helen Paterson, Chief Executive
County Hall, Morpeth, Northumberland, NE61 2EF
T: 0345 600 6400
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AGENDA

PART I

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

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. MINUTES

(Pages
1 - 6)

Minutes of the meetings of the Corporate Services and Economic Growth OSC held on 26th June 2023, as circulated, to be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

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 7 - 16)

To note the decisions of Cabinet since the previous meeting of the OSC and the latest Forward Plan of key decisions. Any further changes made to the Forward Plan will be reported to the Committee.

5. FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE 2023-24 - POSITION AT THE END OF JUNE 2023 (Pages 17 - 54)

The purpose of the report, which was considered on the 12th September 2023, was to ensure that the Cabinet was informed of the current financial position for the Council against the Budget for 2023-24. The Committee are asked to monitor the position and to make appropriate comments.

Councillor Richard Wearmouth, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Corporate Services has been invited to attend for this item.

6. PERFORMANCE OF THE NORTHUMBERLAND LOTTERY (Pages 55 - 64)

The purpose of this report is to provide the Corporate Services and Economic Growth Overview and Scrutiny Committee with an update on the performance of the Northumberland Lottery which was launched on 25 April 2020 following approval by Cabinet on 6 August 2019.

Councillor Richard Wearmouth, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Corporate Services has been invited to attend for this item.

7. ANNUAL WORKFORCE REPORT (Pages 65 - 94)

The purpose of this report is to:

- Provide an annual position statement in relation to strategic workforce related areas of assurance, workstreams/associated action plans and progress to date within key areas for Northumberland County Council for the full financial year of 2022/23.
- Provide assurance to the Corporate Services and Economic Growth Overview & Scrutiny Committee that there is provision and monitoring in place to achieve necessary Key Performance Indicators relating to the workforce on an ongoing basis.
- Provide elected members with an overview of the strategic direction for the Council's workforce related matters.
- Provide elected members with an overview of the monitoring and actions taken during the period from 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023 in accordance with the Council's Whistleblowing Policy for employees. Members are asked to note that other aspects of Whistleblowing which are not employee related are logged and maintained by the Council's Monitoring Officer.

Councillor Richard Wearmouth, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Corporate Services has been invited to attend for this item.

- 8. REGENERATION UPDATE** (Pages 95 - 104)

Committee will receive a presentation which will provide an update on the regeneration within the County.

Councillor Wojciech Ploszaj, Cabinet Member for Supporting Businesses and Opportunities is invited to attend for this item.

- 9. PARKS AND GREEN SPACES** (Pages 105 - 106)

At the Corporate Services and Economic Growth Overview and Scrutiny Committee held in June 2023 members sought an explanation as to why the £250,000 allocated to the Parks Enhancement Capital Programme had not been utilised in 2022/23 and an assurance that it would be spent this year.

Councillor Colin Horncastle, Cabinet Member for Looking After our Environment is invited to attend for this item.

- 10. WORK PROGRAMME AND MONITORING FORM** (Pages 107 - 112)

The Committee is asked to review and note the Corporate Services and Economic Growth Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme for the 2023/24 council year.

- 11. URGENT BUSINESS (IF ANY)**

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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Agenda Item 2

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

CORPORATE SERVICES AND ECONOMIC GROWTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

At a meeting of the **Corporate Services and Economic Growth Overview and Scrutiny Committee** held in the Conference Room 2, County Hall, Morpeth, NE61 2EF on Monday, 26 June 2023 at 10.00 am.

PRESENT

Councillor D. Bawn
(Chairman in the Chair)

COUNCILLORS

Beynon, J.
Dunn, E.
Ezhilchelvan, P.
Grimshaw, L.

Oliver, N.
Robinson, M.
Taylor, C.
Wallace, A.

OFFICERS

Gerrard, S.

Greally, R.

Neilson, S.

Nicholson, S.
Teasdale, K.

Willis, J.

Director of Law and Corporate
Governance (Monitoring Officer)
Assistant Democratic Services
Officer
Executive Director – Place &
Regeneration
Scrutiny Co-ordinator
Recovery and Accounts Payable
Manager
Executive Director –
Transformation and Resources
(Section 151 Officer)

1 member of the press was in attendance.

01. MEMBERSHIP AND TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Chairman reported the membership and terms of reference for the Corporate Services and Economic Growth OSC which were agreed by Council on 17 May 2023.

Membership

10 Members (5:3:1 Ind Gp, 1 LD) (LD place given to ING)

Quorum – 3

Chair: D. Bawn

Vice Chair: L. Dunn

Conservative	Labour	Independent Group	Liberal Democrats	Green Party	Ind Non-Grouped
D. Bawn	L. Dunn	C. Taylor			M. Robinson
J. Beynon	L. Grimshaw				
P. Ezhilchelvan	A. Wallace				
P. Jackson					
N. Oliver					

Terms of reference:

- (1) To maintain an overview of the Council's Annual Budget and Budgetary Management via the Medium Term Financial Plan.
- (2) To review the state of Northumberland and the County Council's activity in delivering its Corporate Plan.
- (3) To maintain an overview of the Council's performance management arrangements; highlighting areas of poor performance and monitoring recovery delivery plans.
- (4) To maintain an overview of the Management Agreements in place between the Council and Advance Northumberland.
- (5) To monitor, review and make recommendations about:
 - Corporate Services: Organisational Development, Health and Safety, ICT Strategy, Corporate Governance, Financial Services, Procurement Strategy, Risk Strategy, Shared and Traded Services
 - Partnership development coordination with local organisations
 - Relationships with external bodies
 - Regeneration and Economic Development

- Strategic Transport Network and Infrastructure
- Employability, Skills, and removing barriers to work
- Capital Programme and Asset Management
- Support to VCS organisations and the Council's relationship with town and parish councils.

RESOLVED that the membership and terms of reference be noted.

02. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Corporate Services and Economic Growth Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 17 April 2023, as circulated, be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

03. FORWARD PLAN AND CABINET DECISIONS

The Forward Plan of forthcoming Key Cabinet decisions was reported to the Committee as well as Cabinet decisions made since the previous OSC meeting. (Report enclosed with the signed minutes as Appendix A).

RESOLVED that the Forward Plan of key decisions and Cabinet decisions be noted.

04. PRESENTATIONS FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS ON FORTHCOMING ISSUES

Simon Neilson, Executive Director – Place and Regeneration, gave a presentation to the committee. Which provided an overview of the directorate structure for place and regeneration. It outlined the services within the directorate that would fall under the remit of the committee. The presentation also highlighted potential areas where the committee may want to focus on.

The following comments were made in response to members questions: -

- It was acknowledged that there were frustrations with the delays surrounding the former British Volt project at Cambois. There was commercial sensitivity around the project, and it was suggested that a report come to scrutiny. The report would include both public information and a confidential part to discuss more sensitive matters.
- Officers confirmed that there would be a regeneration update to the committee which would give members an overview of the broad programme. The committee would then be able to select specific areas where it would like further information brought to scrutiny.
- The devolution deal was expected to be a smooth transition. There were responsibilities from both the Authority and North of Tyne that would transcend into the devolution deal. There was a healthy relationship between all

Authorities and there had been a good track record of working well together in the region.

Jan Willis, Executive Director – Transformation and Resources gave a presentation to the committee which outlined the structure and responsibilities of the new directorate. It suggested possible upcoming areas that may be of interest to the committee. The BEST value action plan had lots of different workstreams that could be brought to scrutiny to look at in more detail. Digital access projects would look at broadband connectivity within schools and more rural areas.

The following comments were made in response to members questions: -

- It was confirmed that different workstreams from the BEST delivery programme could be examined at committee. Commercialisation opportunities would fall under the BEST asset workstream. It was reiterated that the BEST delivery programme was a 3 year programme and there would be different priorities throughout its delivery.
- Capital programme delivery would look at better forecasting and making sure resources are put in place to delivery projects in a timely manner. It was acknowledged that currently there was an issue with overprogramming which led to frustrations with delays and escalating costs. Delivery is becoming more challenging due to the current economic conditions and high levels of inflation affecting construction costs and raw material prices, however officers remain focused on what can be controlled.

RESOLVED that the information was noted and the issues identified for further examination be included on the Committee’s work programme.

05. FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE 2022-23: POSITION AT THE END OF FEBRUARY 2022 (PROVISIONAL OUTTURN 2022-23)

Councillor Richard Wearmouth, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services introduced the report to committee. Jan Willis, Executive Director of Finance (Section 151 Officer), was present to respond to member’s questions. The report outlined the provisional outturn of the Council against the budget for 2022-23 which was based on the position at the end of February.

The following comments were made in response to members questions: -

- It was acknowledged that similar themes had ran throughout the year including the position on vacancies. It was noted that a strategy had been implemented early on in the financial year to review all vacancies in the Authority to generate a saving on the budget.
- The employment offer was being looked at through the BEST programme and it was hoped that as the job market improved the difficulties with recruitment would ease. It was noted that a workforce report would come to committee in September.

- The reserve for defective streetlighting was due to the contract ending with the current company therefore a sinking fund was being created to meet future maintenance costs.
- It was confirmed that Adult Services had previous issues with the delivery of budget savings as team responsible for reviewing packages of care had been diverted to other work, however the savings were back on track and Adult Services had underspent overall.
- Day-to-day delivery of services would continue to be prioritised to ensure that there was no impact on the services due to staffing vacancies.
- The pay forecast would change depending on what vacancies were filled and what the pay award would be, which was yet to be determined.
- The officers did not have information readily available to explain why £250,000 approved in 2022-23 for parks and green spaces that was not utilised. Members felt that projects in parks and green spaces that were delayed should be communicated with them. Members requested a short report on the Queen Elizabeth II Park and projects in Bedlington.
- Value for money was not just about external suppliers. There would be a workstream through BEST to establish baseline value for money which could be brought to a future meeting.
- Members thanked officers for the exhaustive report.

RESOLVED that

- (a) the information be noted, and
- (b) a report be presented to the next meeting setting out the proposals for ensuring the delivery the Parks and Green Spaces Programme.

06. DEBT RECOVERY UPDATE

Keith Teasdale, Recovery and Accounts Payable Manager, introduced the report to committee. The report gave an update on the debt position since March 2023. The report showed that sundry debt had increased due to several reasons. There was still a backlog from the pandemic which had meant that Council Tax and Business Rate arrears had increased. Claimants were moving over to Universal Credit which made it difficult for overpayments to be reclaimed. A service review had been undertaken and a recruitment drive had happened with people coming into post.

The following comments were made in response to members questions: -

- The report was a snapshot as of 31st March, but it was a constantly moving target. It was impossible to say that everything was 100% right however officers

were confident that it was a low error rate. If members had individual cases that they wanted officers to look at Gillian Caisley would be able to assist them.

- Officers felt that it would be 2025 onwards before everyone would be transferred over to Universal Credit. The service was looking at how the Council Tax Support Scheme would evolve to reflect this.
- As part of the annual budget the service did give forecasts on caseloads, but it was acknowledged that it was difficult to do this with any accuracy as it was the DWP who were driving the roll out of the scheme. There was potential for there to come a point after the roll out where administrative costs would become unsustainable if systems and processes weren't adapted which was why they were being looked at now.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

07. WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee received an update on its Work Programme for the 2022/23 council year, including an assurance that the additional issues identified at the meeting would be included.

RESOLVED that this information be noted.

Chairman _____

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 – 11 July	https://northumberland.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=140&MId=2248
Report of the Communities and Place OSC - Firefighters Decontamination	<p>11 July 2023:</p> <p>RESOLVED that Cabinet approve the recommendation of the Communities and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee that financial support for the recommendations made by the fire and rescue service be provided to ensure that Northumberland leads the way to reduce the risk of contamination and support fire and rescue personnel.</p>
<p>District Heating Update and Partnership Procurement</p> <p>To provide a summary of the progress made across the eight District Heating studies completed for the county, feedback on proposed delivery models for the schemes and seek approval to proceed with the next phase of activity</p>	<p>11 July 2023:</p> <p>RESOLVED that:</p> <p>(a) Cabinet agree that the council's preferred delivery option for District Heating is Model 3 (Supply Framework). Under this model the Council will enter into a framework agreement with a Heat Provider and agree a form of connection and supply agreement to be used for the supply of heat to the Council across the eight towns, namely Alnwick, Ashington, Berwick, Blyth, Cramlington, Hexham, Morpeth and Prudhoe on a town-by town basis as the schemes go-live;</p> <p>(b) Cabinet approve a procurement exercise to select and appoint a legal and commercial advisor to support the procurement activities needed to appoint a Heat Provider. The forecast cost of the external legal and commercial advisor support is ~£160,000, which it is expected will be 100% funded through the NELEP Energy Accelerator Fund at no additional cost to NCC. In the unlikely case that the NELEP do not fund the project a separate request for NCC to provide funding will be made;</p> <p>(c) Cabinet resource and undertake a procurement exercise to appoint a Heat Provider;</p> <p>(d) Cabinet agree to the inclusion of the council's future heat load to be in scope for commercially viable District Heating schemes in each of the eight locations, provided the commercial, economic and net zero tests are met by the Heat Provider; and</p>

<p>Northumberland Stewardship and Rural Growth Investment Programme – Nature Recovery Response</p> <p>To outline the Council’s role in leading the region’s response to nature recovery as set out in the North East Devolution Deal and, within this context, seek consideration to the declaration of an ecological emergency in Northumberland.</p>	<p>(e) the timescales for delivery given market competition, be noted.</p> <p>11 July 2023:</p> <p>RESOLVED that</p> <p>(a) Cabinet accept, in principle and subject to the approval of the North of Tyne Combined Authority (NTCA) Cabinet, the role of leading the development of the statutory North of Tyne Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) on behalf of the Combined Authority;</p> <p>(b) Cabinet endorse the Council’s role as accountable body for the participation of the English part of the Borderlands area in the Government’s Local Investment in Natural Capital (LINC) programme;</p> <p>(c) Cabinet accept the anticipated grant awards of £0.285 million and £1.000 million respectively for the development of the North of Tyne LNRS and the delivery of the Borderlands LINC into the Council’s revenue budget;</p> <p>(d) Cabinet agree to declaring an ecological emergency to further strengthen the Council’s commitment to rural stewardship and to demonstrate the significant role of nature recovery in mitigating the climate emergency;</p> <p>(e) Cabinet develop a response, within the context of our Climate Change Action Plan, to the ecological emergency using our new obligations under the Environment Act 2021 as a framework; namely the development of a Local Nature Recovery Strategy; the strengthened duty to conserve and enhance biodiversity with a requirement to publish action plans and progress reports; and the introduction of mandatory biodiversity net gain in the planning system; and</p> <p>(f) A progress report be made to Cabinet in six months.</p>
<p>Asset Management Framework</p> <p>To provide Cabinet with information relating to the new Asset Management Framework for 2023-2026 that has been developed to guide decision making and clearly outline the strategic plans for the estate to 2026.</p>	<p>11 July 2023:</p> <p>RESOLVED that:</p> <p>(a) Cabinet note the purpose and content of the Asset Management Framework for 2023-2026; and</p> <p>(b) Cabinet agree to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The new Asset Management Framework; as attached at Appendix 1 – and • Receive further updates on the delivery of the Asset Management Framework on a quarterly basis.

<p>Financial Performance 2022-23 – Final Outturn (subject to audit)</p> <p>The purpose of the report is to report the final outturn position (subject to audit) for the Council against the Budget for 2022-23</p>	<p>11 July 2023:</p> <p>RESOLVED that:</p> <p>(a) Cabinet approve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the new grants and amendments to existing grants at Appendix A and the required changes to the budgets. • the net re-profiling to the Capital Programme of £23.940 million from 2022-23 to 2023-24 to reflect expenditure levels in the financial year; and <p>(b) Cabinet note:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A balanced position following a transfer of £5.916 million to the General Fund, after the transfers to Earmarked Reserves agreed as part of the Provisional Outturn report at the Cabinet meeting on 9 May 2023. • that this final outturn is based on the draft Statement of Accounts and is subject to external audit. • the delivery of the approved savings at Appendix B. • the use of the contingency shown at Appendix Q. • the use of reserves shown at Appendix R. • the virements requested by services shown at Appendix S.
<p>Summary of New Capital Proposals considered by Officer Capital Strategy Group</p> <p>The report summarises proposed amendments to the Capital Programme considered by the officer Capital Strategy Group.</p>	<p>11 July 2023:</p> <p>RESOLVED that:</p> <p>(a) Children’s Residential Homes:</p> <p>a) Cabinet approve the reallocation of capital funds of £1.260 million in 2023-24 from Black Close House to purchase six private residential properties which will support the development of multi-building children’s residential homes in Northumberland.</p> <p>b) Cabinet approve that delegated authority is given to the Executive Director for Children, Young People and Education to enter into a contract(s) for the acquired units as and when they are identified up to the approved budget limit.</p> <p>(b) BT Openreach Gainshare receipt</p>

	<p>a) Cabinet approve the receipt of BT Openreach gainshare funding amounting to £2.145 million.</p> <p>b) Cabinet approve the addition of £2.145 million to the Council's capital expenditure budget in 2023-24 to be split as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Repayment to Building Digital UK (BDUK) of £0.989 million (46.11% of the total gainshare receipt) as per terms of the Contract; and, ii) £1.156 million into Community Broadband in respect of enabling additional premises to access the £2,500 top up voucher to help provide gigabit connectivity in the hardest to reach areas <p>(c) Levelling Up Funding for Rapid Electric Vehicle (EV) Chargers:</p> <p>a) Cabinet approve the receipt of Levelling Up funding amounting to £0.453 million awarded to the Council for the provision of ten new rapid EV chargers to be delivered between April 2023 and March 2025, split as follows: £0.347 million in 2023-24; and, £0.106 million in 2024-25.</p> <p>b) Cabinet note the match funding NCC contribution of £0.050 million (10%) from the existing capital allocation in the Climate Change Capital Fund in 2024-25, creating a total budget of £0.503 million.</p> <p>(d) Alnwick Playhouse – Replacement of Lighting Rig:</p> <p>a) Cabinet approve the creation of a new capital project in 2023-24 for the installation of a new lighting rig at Alnwick Playhouse to ensure that the main auditorium is fully health and safety compliant.</p> <p>b) Cabinet approve the reallocation of capital funds of £0.100 million in 2023-24 from Ashington North East Quarter Redevelopment (Phase 2) to Alnwick Playhouse Lighting Rig to fund installation of the new rig.</p> <p>c) Cabinet note that the Strategic Regeneration Projects budget will reallocate £0.100 million to the Ashington North East Quarter Redevelopment (Phase 2) project in 2024-25.</p>
<p>Energising Blyth Programme: Levelling Up Deep Dive</p> <p>To update Cabinet regarding the establishment,</p>	<p>11 July 2023:</p> <p>RESOLVED that:</p> <p>(a) Cabinet accept the award of £20.71m Levelling Up Deep Dive capital and revenue funding from the Department</p>

<p>development and delivery of the £20.71m Levelling Up Deep Dive (LUDD) funding awarded to Blyth earlier this year. The report explains how this funding will be added to the Energising Blyth programme in the town to have a catalytic impact on the town's economy and drive forward the implementation of the Blyth Town Investment Plan.</p> <p>This report seeks approval to accept this funding award from UK Government and to take a number of key early steps to enable the implementation of key projects</p>	<p>for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) and its use as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add £19,630,000 to the Capital Programme as an identified budget allocation for the capital projects identified in this report. • Add £1,080,000 as an identified revenue budget for the revenue funded projects and programme management arrangements outlined in this report; <p>(b) Cabinet note that the funding will be used to deliver new initiatives to support the delivery of the Blyth Town Investment Plan as part of the Energising Blyth Programme including 'Welcoming and Safe Blyth', 'Housing Renewal and Town Centre Living' and 'Energy Central Campus: Technical Training Kit';</p> <p>(c) Cabinet approve the associated financial profiles as set out in the report fully funded by the Levelling Up Deep Dive and agree to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a new Blyth Empty Homes Team in 2023 for two years from appointment • Authorise the S151 officer in consultation with the Executive Director of Place and Regeneration to enter into internal grant funding agreement for the empty homes team revenue costs subject to confirmation of funding being in place and local assurance being followed • Authorise the S151 officer in consultation with the Executive Director of Place and Regeneration to approve initial design fees up to the value of £1,993,469 across the programme • The associated programme management and assurance arrangements to support the programme's delivery as set out in the report. This includes the appointment of a Senior Programme Officer in 2023 to support the programme funded for two years from appointment drawn from the revenue budget above.
<p>Environmental Enforcement Fixed Penalty Notice and Penalty Notice Policy 2023</p> <p>To present the revised Environmental Enforcement Fixed Penalty and Penalty Notice Policy 2023 for consideration and adoption.</p>	<p>11 July 2023:</p> <p>RESOLVED that:</p> <p>(a) Cabinet agree and adopt the proposed policy; and</p> <p>(b) Cabinet agree and adopt the fine levels given in the schedule of the policy.</p>

<p>Drug and Alcohol Treatment and Recovery Service for Northumberland – Permission to Award Contract</p> <p>The purpose of this report is to provide the background to the need to provide a drug and alcohol treatment and recovery service as part of the Council’s statutory public health functions, to confirm that the procurement exercise has commenced, and to seek permission to award the contract once the exercise is complete</p>	<p>11 July 2023:</p> <p>RESOLVED that Cabinet approve the award of the contract to the successful contractor for £3,356,709 per annum. The maximum contract period is October 2023 – March 2030.</p>
<p>Cabinet Papers – 12 September</p>	<p>https://northumberland.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=140&MId=2256</p>
<p>BEST: Delivery Partner Delegated Decision</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>12 September 2023</p> <p>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.</p>
<p>Financial Performance 2023-24 – Position at the end of June 2023</p>	<p>To be considered by the CSEG OSC on 25 September 2023.</p>
<p>Loan to Whittingham, Callaly and Alnham Parish Council</p> <p>The report provided details of a potential loan facility to Whittingham, Callaly and Alnham Parish Council (WCAPC) of £4,435 towards the capital reserve.</p>	<p>12 September 2023</p> <p>RESOLVED that Cabinet approve a loan facility of £4,435 to WCAPC subject to the following:</p> <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.
<p>Summary of New Capital Proposals considered by</p>	<p>12 September 2023</p>

<p>Officer Capital Strategy Group</p> <p>1 Family Hub Grant</p> <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>Additional Market Sustainability and Improvement Grant</p>	<p>RESOLVED that Cabinet:</p> <p>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</p> <p>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> <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> <p>a) Accept the funds from the Levelling up Fund Tranche 2 of £14.712 million;</p> <p>b) Approve funds in line with the costs outlined in the table set out in paragraph 9.5; and</p> <p>c) Approve the reallocation in the Capital Programme of £2.000 million from the existing allocation for Local Cycling and Walking Programme.</p> <p>RESOLVED that Cabinet:</p> <p>a) Approve capital expenditure totalling £0.043 million for improvements to the West Bedlington Cemetery Garden of Remembrance; and</p> <p>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> <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>RESOLVED that:-</p>
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	<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; andb. 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.
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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>	10 October 2023
<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>	10 October 2023
<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>	10 October 2023
<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>	10 October 2023
<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>C. Horncastle/D. Feige - 0777 429 5253</p>	7 November 2023

<p>Leisure Programme Update</p> <p>To update Cabinet with progress on the Leisure programme</p> <p>J. Watson/M. Donnelly 07517 553463</p>	<p>12 December 2023</p>
<p>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>	<p>9 April 2024</p>



Northumberland County Council

CABINET

12 September 2023

Financial Performance 2023-24 – Position at the end of June 2023

Report of Councillor Richard Wearmouth, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services

Executive Director: Jan Willis, Executive Director of Transformation & Resources

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to ensure that the Cabinet is informed of the current financial position for the Council against the Budget for 2023-24.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are requested to:

- Recommend that County Council approves the use of £1.855 million from contingency to partly fund the shortfall in the expected cost of pay awards for 2023-24.
- Approve the re-profiling to the Capital Programme of £15.902 million from 2023-24 to 2024-25 to reflect estimated expenditure levels in the current financial year.
- Approve the transfer of £1.556 million from the Public Health main grant reserve to provide additional services to reduce poverty and health inequalities.

- 2.2 Members are requested to note:

- the projected overspend on services of £4.115 million and the assumptions outlined in this report.
- the projected net overspend of £4.471 million after accounting for outstanding inflationary pressures and the utilisation of the Exceptional Inflation Reserve and contingency. The financial monitoring process is a continuous process, and it is not unusual to predict an overspend in the first formal monitoring report as pressures in the system are recognised and realised. Services are now taking appropriate action to bring the budget back into balance and corporately work is underway to ascertain if rising interest rates will ensure a favourable return to the Council and

improve the position further. An updated position for the 6 months to September 2023 will be presented to Cabinet on 12 December 2023.

- the supplementary estimates at Appendix A and the required changes to the budgets.
- the delivery of the approved savings at Appendix B.
- the use of the contingency shown at Appendix L.
- the use of reserves shown at Appendix M.
- the virements requested by services shown at Appendix O.

3. Link to Corporate Plan

3.1 The Council's budget is aligned to the priorities in the Corporate Plan 2023-26 with significant investment in each of the priorities; achieving value for money, tackling inequalities and driving economic growth as well as specific funding set aside to deliver Best Value through the BEST work.

4. Key issues

4.1 Overall Position

4.1.1 The report provides information and analysis on the Council's financial performance and use of resources to the end of June 2023. The Council set its budget for 2023-24 on 22 February 2023 and this report focuses on the financial performance to the end of June 2023 and the projected year end position at that point in time.

5. Projected Revenue Outturn 2023-24

5.1 The Council's projected revenue outturn position, within each service area is shown in summary at Section 6 of the report (figures in brackets denote an underspend); and in detail within Appendices C - K of the report.

5.2 The Council's overall annual revenue expenditure is managed across a number of areas:

- a. The General Fund with a net budget of £401.910 million, providing revenue funding for the majority of the Council's services.
- b. The Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) of £160.155 million in 2023-24, which is ring-fenced for schools funding, overseen by the Schools' Forum, and managed within the Children, Young People and Education Directorate.
- c. Public Health, a ring-fenced grant of £17.932 million in 2023-24, must be spent to support the delivery of the Public Health Outcomes Framework and is managed within Public Health, Inequalities and Stronger Communities.

- d. The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) with a gross expenditure budget of £42.625 million in 2023-24, is ring-fenced, and reported separately from the General Fund, and is managed within the Place and Regeneration Directorate. The HRA forecast is detailed in Appendix L.

6. General Fund

6.1 The following table provides a summary of how each Directorate is performing against the General Fund revenue budget for the 2023-24 financial year.

Service	Budget	Forecast Outturn	Variance
	£m	£m	£m
Adults, Ageing & Wellbeing	130.223	130.354	0.131
Chief Executive	34.497	34.409	(0.088)
Children, Young People & Education	86.612	89.680	3.068
Place and Regeneration	82.093	83.500	1.407
Public Health, Inequalities & Stronger Communities	12.971	12.721	(0.250)
Transformation & Resources	27.440	27.110	(0.330)
Total Services	373.836	377.774	3.938
Corporate Expenditure and Income	28.074	28.251	0.177
Total Net Expenditure	401.910	406.025	4.115
Budget funded by:			
Council Tax	(231.720)	(231.720)	-
Retained Business Rates (including grants)	(92.863)	(92.863)	-
Revenue Support Grant	(12.430)	(12.430)	-
Other Corporate Grants	(47.014)	(47.014)	-
Earmarked Reserves	(17.883)	(17.883)	-
Total Funding of Services	(401.910)	(401.910)	-
Net Total	-	4.115	4.115

6.2 Inflationary Pressures

- 6.2.1 During the preparation of the 2023-24 budget and the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) a significant sum of money was earmarked to deal with “routine inflation” and what the Council referred to as “hyper-inflation”. It was anticipated that the hyper-inflation would continue for two years and money has been set aside in reserves to fund these additional costs.
- 6.2.2 The forecast position shown in section 6.1 includes most inflationary increases, however the actual cost of pay inflation has not been included where pay awards have not yet been agreed. The expected cost of pay awards for 2023-24 is anticipated to be significantly more than the 4.0% set aside in the 2023-24 budget. Based on the current pay offer, the shortfall in funding is expected to be £3.228 million. The £1.017 million set aside in the Exceptional Inflation Reserve at the end of 2022-23 and the use of £1.855 million which is the balance in the contingency, pending County Council approval, will be utilised to offset this, leaving a net shortfall of £0.356 million.
- 6.2.3 The net forecast position, after accounting for outstanding inflationary pressures and the utilisation of the Exceptional Inflation Reserve and contingency, is shown below:

	£m
Overspend on services as per Section 6.1	4.115
Pay award funding shortfall (estimate)	3.228
Transfer from Exceptional Inflation Reserve	(1.017)
Use of contingency	(1.855)
Net overspend	4.471

7. Other General Fund Items

- 7.1 Appendix A is a schedule of all supplementary estimates, including new grants and amendments to existing grants (capital and revenue) which the Council has been awarded during April to June 2023.
- 7.2 The Council at its meeting in February 2023 agreed to implement a range of savings and efficiencies totalling £17.045 million in 2023-24. A recent review of the delivery of those savings has been conducted and the results are illustrated at Appendix B.
- 7.3 Appendix L is a schedule of all items which have been released from contingency during April to June 2023.
- 7.4 Appendix M is a schedule of the movement in the Council’s Reserves.
- 7.5 Appendix O is a schedule of virements during April to June 2023.

8. CAPITAL PROGRAMME

8.1 The Capital Programme for 2023-24 totalling £222.949 million was agreed by full Council on 22 February 2023.

8.2 The Capital Programme has changed during the year as the phasing of schemes was reviewed at the end of the previous financial year with £72.638 million re-profiled from 2022-23 to 2023-24 and further approvals totalling £26.771 million have been agreed by Cabinet for additional schemes.

8.3 The following table sets out the position as at the end of June:

Directorate	Original Budget	Approved Adjustments	Revised Budget	Expenditure to date	Forecast Expenditure	Net Variance	Over / (Under) spend	Reprofiling
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Adults, Ageing and Wellbeing	4.427	2.433	6.860	0.275	5.380	(1.480)	-	(1.480)
Chief Executive	2.016	0.500	2.516	0.639	2.516	-	-	-
Children, Young People and Education	32.622	9.107	41.729	2.032	39.672	(2.057)	(0.032)	(2.025)
Place and Regeneration	166.270	78.038	244.308	21.134	234.246	(10.062)	(0.915)	(9.147)
Public Health, Inequalities and Stronger Communities	0.800	1.085	1.885	0.845	2.085	0.200	0.200	-
Transformation and Resources	16.814	8.246	25.060	0.879	21.810	(3.250)	-	(3.250)
Total Programme	222.949	99.409	322.358	25.804	305.709	(16.649)	(0.747)	(15.902)
Financed by:								
Capital Receipts	5.589	-	5.589					
External Grants	96.863	58.475	155.338					
GF Borrowing	106.236	35.177	141.413					
GF Revenue Contributions (RCCO)	0.250	5.757	6.007					
HRA Contributions (MRR & RCCO)	14.011	-	14.011					
Total Financing	222.949	99.409	322.358					

- 8.4 Year-to-date capital expenditure is £25.804 million with forecast expenditure of £305.709 million. The major areas of capital investment during the year to date are as follows:
- i. £15.789 million invested in transport schemes including infrastructure, traffic management, integrated transport schemes and the reintroduction of the Northumberland Line.
 - ii. £1.937 million invested in fleet replacement.
 - iii. £3.103 million invested in the Council's housing stock.
- 8.5 There is a net forecast underspend of £16.649 million across the 2023-24 Capital Programme comprising of £15.902 million net reprofiling from 2023-24 to 2024-25 and £0.747 million underspend. A summary of the significant variances can be found at Appendix K with an explanation of those greater than £0.250 million.
- 8.6 It is recommended that Cabinet notes estimated net reprofiling of £15.902 million from 2023-24 to 2024-25.

9. Capital Receipts

- 9.1 The level of capital receipts available to support the 2023-24 Capital Programme was estimated to be £5.589 million (£1.700 million General Fund and £3.889 million HRA). The following table shows the current position regarding asset disposals:

Asset Disposals	General Fund £m	HRA £m
Completed and available for use in year	0.002	0.399
On the market	1.195	-
Terms Agreed	1.892	-
Contracts exchanged	0.744	-

- 9.2 The closing balance on the Capital Receipts Reserve at 31 March 2023 was £8.329 million (£0.092 million General Fund and £8.237 million HRA).

10. TREASURY MANAGEMENT

10.1 The Treasury Management Strategy Statement for 2023-24 was agreed by full Council on 23 February 2023.

10.2 The following table summarises the Council's quarterly borrowing activity for April to June 2023:

	Previous Quarter	Movement - June 23	Current
Outstanding principal - at quarter end (£m)	745.378	(0.502)	744.876
Weighted average interest rate - year to date (%)	3.147	-	3.147
Quarter end external borrowing as % of Operational Boundary (Borrowing)	71.396	5.866	77.262

10.3 Whilst the Council has an overall cap on borrowing through an Authorised Limit, the Operational Boundary is where the Council would expect its borrowing to be. At the end of June 2023, the Council's external borrowing represented 77.26% of its Operational Boundary, which was approved as part of the Treasury Management Strategy for 2023-24. The Operational Boundary is only a guide and may be breached or undershot without significant concern, with borrowing driven by economic and market considerations as well as interest rates.

The table below demonstrates that in the quarter to 30 June 2023 the Council has maintained gross borrowing within its authorised limit and operational Boundary.

	Authorised Limit for External Debt £m	Operational Boundary for External Debt £m	Actual 30 June 2023 £m
External Borrowing	1,156.913	964.094	744.876

10.4 The following table provides an analysis by type of the quarterly borrowing activity for April to June 2023:

Lender Category	Repayment Type	Opening Balance £m	Repaid – Apr - Jun 2023 £m	New Borrowing Apr - Jun 2023 £m	Closing Balance £m
PWLB	EIP	3.501	(0.500)	-	3.001

Lender Category	Repayment Type	Opening Balance	Repaid – Apr - Jun 2023	New Borrowing Apr - Jun 2023	Closing Balance
PWLB	Annuity	0.540	-	-	0.540
Salix	EIP	0.033	(0.002)	-	0.031
PWLB	Maturity	445.704	-	-	445.704
Other Local Authorities	Maturity	50.000	-	-	50.000
Other/Market	Maturity	245.600	-	-	245.600
Total		745.378	(0.502)	-	744.876

10.5 Measuring the maturity structure of borrowing ensures a reasonable spread of maturing debt as a safety mechanism to ensure significant amounts of debt do not mature at a time when interest rates for refinancing the debt may be high. The following table demonstrates the maturity structure of the Council's borrowing at 30 June 2023, against the prescribed limits:

Maturity Structure	Upper Limit for 2023-24	Actual 30 June 2023
Under 12 months	25%	7%
1 year - 2 years	40%	1%
2 years within 5 years	60%	3%
5 years within 10 years	80%	7%
10 years and above	100%	82%

10.6 The following table summarises the Council's quarterly investment activity for April to June 2023:

	Previous Quarter	Movement - Apr - June 2023	Current
Outstanding principal - at month end (£m)	114.450	40.100	154.550
Weighted average interest rate - year to date (%)	4.160	0.284	4.444

10.7 The following table provides an analysis by type of the investment activity for the quarter April to June 2023:

Category	Opening Balance	Repaid – Apr - Jun 2023	New Investment Apr - Jun 2023	Closing Balance
	£m	£m	£m	£m
Term Deposit Banks	-	-	25.000	25.000
Term Deposit Building Societies	-	(10.000)	20.000	10.000
Term Deposit Other Local Authorities	25.000	(25.000)	35.000	35.000
Money Market Funds	79.450	(168.250)	163.350	74.550
Debt Management Office (DMO)	-	-	-	-
Notice Accounts	10.000	-	-	10.000
Total	114.450	(203.250)	243.350	154.550

10.8 The movement in the Money Market Funds represents daily deposits and withdrawals to manage cashflow.

10.9 Limits are set with regard to the Council's liquidity requirements and to reduce the need for early sale of an investment and are based on the availability of funds after each year-end. The table below summarises performance against the prescribed limits for the year to 30 June 2023:

	Limit 2023-2024 £m	Actual Highest £m	Actual 30 June 2023 £m
Principal sums invested > 364 days	120.000	-	-

11. Transformation Fund Reserve (BEST)

11.1 The Council at its budget meeting on 23 February 2022 agreed to invest £3.000 million per annum for three years in a strategic change programme, now known as BEST programme of work.

11.2 To date a number of commitments have already been made against that fund as follows:

	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	Total
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Council Investment	3.000	3.000	3.000	-	9.000
Commitments to 30 June 2023	0.738	2.203	2.081	1.131	6.153
Balance Available	2.262	0.797	0.919	(1.131)	2.847

11.3 Projects have already been approved by the Transformation Board, including for example, Fix My Street, Living Leader and the Labman management system. In addition to this, it will be necessary to recruit to a number of fixed term roles in order that the project can progress, and the service improvements can be delivered quickly. The roles will be required for a maximum of three years and approval has been given for the estimated cost of £2.567 million.

11.4 It will also be necessary to involve a number of staff across the Council in the BEST programme of work. However, their roles within the workstreams will require a full-time commitment so it is recommended that the Transformation Fund is also used to fund the temporary backfill for those staff involved in the work. Approval has been given for the estimated cost of this, which is £0.661 million over the next three years.

11.4 It is likely that the profiling of the commitments will extend into 2025-26. The expenditure and commitments to 30 June are as follows

	2023-24 Approved requests	2023-24 Expendi ture to 30 June	2023-24 Commit ments July to Mar	2023-24 Forecast Expendit ure	2023-24 Forecas t Varianc e
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Opening Balance	3.000				
Total as at 30 June	2.203	0.101	1.510	1.611	(0.592)
Balance Remaining at 30 June	0.797				1.389

Implications

Policy	The report provides information and analysis on the Council's financial performance against budget as set in the Medium-Term Financial Plan 2023-27 which supports the priorities outlined in the Corporate Plan 2023-26.
Finance and value for money	The report is of a financial nature and the detail is contained within the body of the report.
Legal	There are no immediate legal implications arising from the recommendations within this report.
Procurement	There are no specific procurement implications within this report.
Human Resources	There are no specific human resources implications within this report.
Property	There are no specific property implications within this report.
Equalities (Impact Assessment attached)	There are no specific equalities implications within this report.
Risk Assessment	The risks associated with the budget were considered in February 2023 and were considered to be acceptable.
Crime & Disorder	There are no specific crime and disorder implications within this report.
Customer Consideration	There are no specific customer consideration implications within this report.
Carbon reduction	There are no specific carbon reduction implications within this report.
Health & Wellbeing	The Council's budget is founded on the principle of promoting inclusivity.
Wards	All wards.

Background papers

Cabinet 14 February 2023 and Council 22 February 2023: Budget 2023-24 and Medium-Term Financial Plan 2023-27

Report sign off

	Name
Monitoring Officer/Legal	Stephen Gerrard
Section S151 Officer/Executive Director	Jan Willis
Chief Executive	Helen Paterson
Portfolio Holder(s)	Cllr Richard Wearmouth

Author and Contact Details

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Directorate:	Adults, Ageing & Wellbeing
Grant Awarding Body:	Department of Health & Social Care
Name of Grant:	Client Level Data (CLD) and Short and Long Term (SALT) Data Collections Dual-Run
Purpose:	To provide support to local authorities during the transition of the SALT return to CLD return which will be dual-run in financial year 2023-24
Value:	£18,831
Recurrent/Non-recurrent:	Non-recurrent

Directorate:	Adults, Ageing & Wellbeing
Grant Awarding Body:	North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board
Name of Grant:	Better Care Fund
Purpose:	Inflationary uplift to the Adult Social Care allocation from the NHS minimum contribution to the Better Care Fund
Value:	£995,475
Recurrent/Non-recurrent:	Recurrent

Directorate:	Children, Young People and Education
Grant Awarding Body:	Department for Education
Name of Grant:	Dedicated Schools Grant
Purpose:	The grant is paid in support of the local authority's school budget. The grant allocation was updated in March 2023 to reflect school academy conversions and updated high needs place funding for academies.
Value:	£131,580 reduction in grant
Recurrent/Non-recurrent:	Recurrent

Directorate:	Children, Young People and Education
Grant Awarding Body:	Department for Education
Name of Grant:	Family Hubs and Start for Life Programme Revenue Funding
Purpose:	To improve the Start for Life offer and transform the delivery of family services in local authorities with the highest levels of deprivation and poor health and support the government's levelling up ambitions.
Value:	£7,300 additional grant 2023-24 (£1,376,200 revenue funding)
Recurrent/Non-recurrent:	Non-recurrent

Directorate:	Children, Young People and Education
Grant Awarding Body:	Department for Education
Name of Grant:	Implementation of supported accommodation reforms
Purpose:	To support local authorities to offset increased costs associated with reforms to supported accommodation from October 2023
Value:	£120,136 per annum
Recurrent/Non-recurrent:	Confirmed for 2023-24 and 2024-25 (indicative)

Directorate:	Children, Young People and Education
Grant Awarding Body:	Department for Education
Name of Grant:	Leaving Care allowance uplift implementation Grant
Purpose:	To support local authorities to increase the minimum leaving care allowance to £3,000
Value:	£46,042 per annum
Recurrent/Non-recurrent:	Confirmed for 2023-24 and 2024-25

Directorate:	Children, Young People and Education
Grant Awarding Body:	Department for Education
Name of Grant:	Supporting Families programme
Purpose:	Supporting vulnerable families through whole family working to achieve positive and sustainable outcomes.
Value:	£187,870 potential additional grant (final allocation based upon successful outcomes)
Recurrent/Non-recurrent:	Non-Recurrent

Directorate:	Children, Young People and Education
Grant Awarding Body:	Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities
Name of Grant:	Domestic Abuse Duty – New burdens funding
Purpose:	Provision of support to victims of domestic abuse and their children residing within refuges and other safe accommodation.
Value:	£14,070 additional grant received, £655,784 for 2023-24
Recurrent/Non-recurrent:	Recurrent

Directorate:	Place and Regeneration
Grant Awarding Body:	Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities
Name of Grant:	Homelessness Prevention Grant – 2023-24 Homes for Ukraine Funding Top-Up
Purpose:	To alleviate pressures on homelessness services by supporting guests into suitable sustainable accommodation.
Value:	£338,650
Recurrent/Non-recurrent:	Non-Recurrent

Performance against the 2023-24 savings targets is shown in the table below. The savings have been RAG rated based on the ability to meet the savings target within the year.

Directorate	Red	Amber	Green	Total
	£m	£m	£m	
Adults, Ageing & Wellbeing	-	-	4.679	4.679
Chief Executive	-	0.183	0.268	0.451
Children, Young People & Education	0.301	0.063	0.388	0.752
Place and Regeneration	0.566	-	3.270	3.836
Public Health, Inequalities & Stronger Communities	-	-	0.870	0.870
Transformation & Resources	-	0.051	2.008	2.059
Corporate	-	-	4.398	4.398
Total	0.867	0.297	15.881	17.045

Key

Red – saving not expected to be delivered in year

Amber – saving at risk of non-delivery in year

Green – saving delivered or expected to be delivered in year

Children, Young People & Education

£0.285 million under-achievement in relation to the reduction in the cost of external residential placements. The saving was linked to the capital development of a new NCC children’s home that was originally due to open in May 2023. Delays to the capital works have led to an expected opening date in Autumn 2023 and intake to the additional 4 beds will be staggered over the opening months. The running costs of the home from May 2023 had also been budgeted for and will underspend by £0.322 million depending on the opening date.

Place and Regeneration

£0.382 million under-achievement of Planning Fee income. The budget was increased by £0.782 million as part of the 2021-22 and 2023-24 budget setting process in anticipation of an increase to the national planning fee structure. The changes to the planning application fee system have been considered by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) and draft regulations reflecting the fee increase have been laid before Parliament, albeit later than expected. The proposed fee increase is now subsequently progressing, but an indicative timeframe of April 2024 means that this saving will not be achieved in this financial year.

The savings target of £0.124 million for Tourist Information Centres (TICs) is not expected to be achieved in this financial year. The TICs are continuing to operate on a business-as-usual basis, and this is expected to remain the case until January 2024 at the earliest.

Forecast Revenue Outturn - Detailed budget summary by Service

Service: Adults, Ageing & Wellbeing

Summary by Service	2022-23 Outturn	Budget	Forecast Outturn	Variance
Service	£m	£m	£m	£m
Assessment & Safeguarding	22.238	21.178	21.271	0.093
Integrated Commissioning	84.011	97.592	98.327	0.735
Business Support	4.315	2.773	2.651	(0.122)
In-House Provider Services	6.128	7.484	6.930	(0.554)
Executive Director	0.698	1.196	1.175	(0.021)
Total Adults, Ageing & Wellbeing	117.390	130.223	130.354	0.131

NOTES - Predicted Year End Variances of £0.250 million or more

The main reasons for the forecast position for Adults, Ageing & Wellbeing are outlined below:

- a. Assessment & Safeguarding is forecast to overspend by £0.093 million. This is due to the following:
 - i. Staffing-related budgets are forecast to underspend by £0.174 million as a result of vacant posts;
 - ii. The delay in the redesign of the Telecare service will result in £0.366 million of the 2021-22 approved saving not being achieved again this financial year. It is anticipated that this will be made in full in 2024-25.
- b. Integrated Commissioning is forecast to overspend by £0.735 million. This is due to the following:
 - i. There continues to be an upward trend in the growth in demand for services to support vulnerable people with complex care needs. The service is currently reviewing all care packages in order to manage resources and meet the £3.000 million saving target within this area.
- c. In-House Provider Services is forecast to underspend by £0.554 million. This is due to the following:
 - i. Staffing-related budgets are forecast to underspend by £0.236 million because of vacant posts;
 - ii. Transport related expenditure including client transport costs are forecast to underspend by £0.179 million: and,
 - iii. Income from North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board for clients who have been assessed as being eligible for Continuous Health Care (CHC) or S117 funding under the Mental Health Act is anticipated to be £0.196 million more than budget.

Note - The difference between the figures shown in the table and the explanations above consist of a number of minor variations within each area.

Forecast Revenue Outturn - Detailed budget summary by Service

Service: Chief Executive

Summary by Service	2022-23 Outturn	Budget	Forecast Outturn	Variance
Service	£m	£m	£m	£m
Chief Executive	0.344	0.452	0.412	(0.040)
Fire and Public Protection	22.119	22.396	22.467	0.071
Strategy and Communications	1.104	1.189	1.189	-
Law and Corporate Governance	6.309	6.040	6.116	0.076
Workforce	4.168	4.420	4.225	(0.195)
Total Chief Executive	34.044	34.497	34.409	(0.088)

NOTES - Year End Variances of £0.250 million or more

The main reasons for the forecast position for Chief Executive are outlined below:

- a. Within Fire and Public Protection, there is a forecast underspend of £0.264 million as a result of vacant posts, offset by forecast overtime costs of £0.212 million.
- b. Within Legal Services there is a forecast overspend of £0.076 million. £0.173 million relates to staff regrades which are being paid by the service without corresponding budget, and the cost of the temporary Director of Law and Corporate Governance of £0.066 million prior to the Senior Management restructure, offset by vacancies of £0.111 million. In addition, there is an underspend of £0.050 million in court fees within professional services due to fewer childcare cases progressing through the courts.

Note - The difference between the figures shown in the table and the explanations above consist of a number of minor variations within each area.

Forecast Revenue Outturn - Detailed budget summary by Service

Service: Children, Young People and Education

Summary by Service	2022-23 Outturn	Budget	Forecast Outturn	Variance
Service	£m	£m	£m	£m
Children, Young People and Families	50.226	53.085	55.534	2.449
Education, SEND & Skills	34.980	33.527	34.146	0.619
Total Children, Young People and Education	85.206	86.612	89.680	3.068
Dedicated Schools Grant	(1.532)	162.385	163.043	0.658

NOTES - Year End Variances of £0.250 million or more

The main reasons for the forecast position for Children, Young People and Education are outlined below:

Children, Young People and Families

- a. The Commissioned Placements and Support Services budgets is forecast to overspend by £3.768 million.
 - i. There is a £3.713 million overspend on external residential care placements. The number of placements has risen from 41 in September 2022 to 59 for June 2023 with a surge in demand for emergency provision for young people aged 16 and over. This is partially offset by an underspend detailed below within Early Help on supported accommodation of £0.883 million where there is currently a lack of suitable provision in the region. In addition, a saving of £0.285 million was proposed for 2023-24 which will not be achieved. This was linked to the opening of 4 new beds within residential Children's homes. However, delays to the capital programme will result in a delay in opening the new home until at least October 2023;
- b. The Residential and Family Placement budget is forecast to underspend by £0.597 million due to:
 - i. There is an expected overspend of £0.718 million on foster care allowances (both in-house and independent agencies) adoption allowances and special guardianship allowances. Whilst there has been some growth in the number of SGO allowances, the pressure has largely arisen due to a mandatory inflation rise of 12.43% on the allowances that was announced after the council budget for 2023-24 had been agreed and exceeded the estimated inflation by 7%; and,
 - ii. The new children's home was originally due to open in May 2023, but this is now expected to be October 2023 at the earliest. This will result in an underspend of £0.322 million on the running costs of the home which offsets the saving that will not be achieved on external placements.
 - iii. Kyoeloe House is expected to run at an underspend of £1.086 million. This assumes the unit will maintain occupancy levels of 12 beds throughout the year and follows an increase in the bed price for the 2023-24 financial year.
- c. The Early Help, Northumberland Adolescent Service (NAS) and Disabled Children's Service is forecast to underspend by £1.254 million due:

- i. There is a forecast underspend of £0.883 million on supported accommodation. There is currently a shortage of suitable placements across the county which has led to an increase in short-term emergency provision for young people aged 16+. From 28 October 2023 all providers are required to apply for Ofsted registration which could exacerbate the problem further; and,
- ii. The Unaccompanied Asylum-seeking Children grant has exceeded the budget by £0.191 million.
- d. The Safeguarding service is forecast to overspend by £0.683 million, this is due to the following:
 - i. There is an expected overspend of £0.566 million across the service on client transport. This results from a combination of increased demand for the service and the current high inflationary environment.

Education, SEND & Skills

- a. There is an overspend of £0.720 million on the cost of SEN transport for the 432 routes currently transporting 1,620 pupils and escorts. This is forecast to rise over the year up to 1,713 pupils. The additional demand is expected to be 3.0% more than the growth figure estimated in 2022-23 (12.38%).

Dedicated Schools Grant

- a. The forecast overspend on SEN top-ups is £0.621 million based on expected growth of 16% for the 2023-24 academic year across both mainstream and special schools in the authority.

Note - The difference between the figures shown in the table and the explanations above consist of several minor variations within each area.

Forecast Revenue Outturn - Detailed budget summary by Service

Service: Place and Regeneration

Summary by Service	2022-23 Outturn	Budget	Forecast Outturn	Variance
Service	£m	£m	£m	£m
Economic Development and Growth	7.045	7.232	7.352	0.120
Environment and Transport	71.455	73.121	73.517	0.396
Housing and Planning	5.435	1.740	2.631	0.891
Total Place and Regeneration	83.935	82.093	83.500	1.407

NOTES - Year End Variances of £0.250 million or more

The main reason for the forecast position for the Place and Regeneration Directorate is outlined below:

- a. Environment and Transport is forecast to overspend by £0.396 million.
 - i. The Waste PFI Contract is forecast to overspend by £0.577 million. As of 1 January 2023, the Environment Agency have banned the disposal of upholstered furniture containing Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) from recycling or landfill. The additional cost to handle this separately from other bulky waste is estimated at £0.311 million but work is being undertaken to explore how this can be mitigated. Final Annual Unitary Charge (AUC) inflation rates were higher than the estimates used in budget setting, causing the budget to be exceeded by £0.103 million, and increased waste volumes in quarter one has resulted in forecast additional costs through the AUC of £0.097 million.
- b. Housing and Planning is forecast to overspend by £0.891 million mainly due to:
 - i. £0.782 million underachievement of planning fee income. The income budget was increased by £0.782 million as part of the 2021-22 and 2023-24 budget setting process in anticipation of an increase to the national planning fee structure. The changes to the planning application fee system have been considered by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) and draft Regulations reflecting the fee increase have been laid before Parliament, albeit later than expected. The proposed fee increase is now subsequently progressing, but an indicative timeframe of April 2024 means that this saving will not be achieved in this financial year.

Note - The difference between the figures shown in the table and the explanations above consist of a number of minor variations within each area.

Forecast Revenue Outturn - Detailed budget summary by Service

Service: Public Health, Inequalities and Stronger Communities

Summary by Service	2022-23 Outturn	Budget	Forecast Outturn	Variance
Service	£m	£m	£m	£m
Public Health	0.064	(0.229)	(0.229)	-
Stronger Communities	23.138	13.200	12.950	(0.250)
Total Public Health, Inequalities and Stronger Communities	23.202	12.971	12.721	(0.250)

NOTES - Year End Variances of £0.250 million or more

The main reason for the forecast position for Public Health, Inequalities and Stronger Communities is outlined below:

- a. Public Health:
 - i. The terms of the main grant allow unspent allocations to be carried over into the next financial year. Public Health carried forward a reserve of £5.540 million to financial year 2023-24. It is anticipated that £1.556 million of the reserve will be utilised in year to provide additional services to reduce poverty and health inequalities.
 - ii. The budget also includes an unallocated saving of £0.250 million which will be achieved by utilising the Public Health grant to fund activity currently funded by other Council services.
- b. Community Services:
 - i. Within Registrars there is a forecast overspend of £0.269 million on staffing and travel costs which is offset by an increased income forecast of £0.242 million. These variances are due to the increase in price and volume of weddings and certificate processing, and the associated staffing costs to meet this demand.

Note - The difference between the figures shown in the table and the explanations above consist of a number of minor variations within each area.

Forecast Revenue Outturn - Detailed budget summary by Service

Service: Transformation and Resources

Summary by Service	2022-23 Outturn	Budget	Forecast Outturn	Variance
Service	£m	£m	£m	£m
Digital & IT	10.375	10.799	10.799	-
Finance and Procurement	5.139	5.891	5.560	(0.331)
Strategic Change & Service Improvement	4.620	6.621	6.622	0.001
Audit and Risk Management	0.838	0.853	0.853	-
Executive Director of Transformation and Resources	46.422	3.276	3.276	-
Total Finance	67.394	27.440	27.110	(0.330)

NOTES - Year End Variances of £0.250 million or more

There are no significant variances to date.

Forecast Revenue Outturn - Detailed budget summary by Service

Service: Corporate Expenditure and Income

Summary by Service	2022-23 Outturn	Budget	Forecast Outturn	Variance
Service	£m	£m	£m	£m
Corporate Items	(7.944)	33.125	33.302	0.177
Treasury Management	(26.442)	(23.243)	(23.243)	-
Capital Financing	93.046	18.192	18.192	-
Corporate Funding	(470.047)	(401.910)	(401.910)	-
Total Other Corporate Expenditure & Income	(411.387)	(373.836)	(373.659)	0.177

NOTES - Year End Variances of £0.250 million or more

There are no significant variance to date.

Forecast Revenue Outturn - Detailed budget summary by Service

Service: Housing Revenue Account

Summary by Service	2022-23 Outturn	Budget	Forecast Outturn	Variance
Service	£m	£m	£m	£m
Housing Management	6.312	7.023	6.631	(0.392)
Housing Special	0.891	1.015	1.025	0.010
Repairs and Maintenance	9.540	9.029	10.002	0.973
Housing Capital Works	0.494	0.707	0.707	-
Other HRA Services	13.663	14.829	15.074	0.245
HRA Income	(30.175)	(32.916)	(32.664)	0.252
Total HRA Expenditure & Income	0.725	(0.313)	0.775	1.088

NOTES - Year End Variances of £0.250 million or more

The main reasons for the forecast variance for the Housing Revenue Account are as follows:

- a. Housing Management is forecast to be underspent by £0.392 million mainly due to part year vacancies.
- b. Repairs and Maintenance is forecast to be overspent by £0.973 million. The main reasons are:
 - i. £1.130 million is due to the use of external contractors on more specialised areas of work including surveyors' inspections, provision of expert reports and completion of remedial works in relation to damp and disrepair. The Repair and Maintenance team are looking to create a team dedicated to Housing Disrepair to identify and address issues more quickly to avoid the potential for claims. The team will proactively discourage any potential claims. The team will be funded through posts already within the structure; and
 - ii. There is a forecast underspend of £0.232 million on salaries due to part year vacancies.
- c. Other HRA Services is forecast to overspend by £0.245 million. The main reasons are:
 - i. Interest payable on HRA borrowing has increased by £0.338 million. This is due to the internal borrowing rates payable to the general fund, which are based on the 30-year PWLB rates. They are forecast to increase from 4.5% to 5.5% following a rise in the Bank of England base rate;
 - ii. Interest received on balances is forecast to increase by £0.267 million. This is due to an increase in the 3-year Sterling Overnight Index Average (SONIA) rate which is forecast to average at 3.7% for the current year. The budget was set at an interest rate of 3.0%; and,
 - iii. Depreciation has increased by £0.182 million following an upward revaluation of Council dwellings by the Council's external valuers.

- d. HRA Income is forecast to underachieve by £0.252 million mainly due to dwelling rent income. Voids are currently running at 3.65% rather than the budgeted figure of 3.0%.

Note - The difference between the figures shown in the table and the explanations above consist of a number of minor variations within each area.

Key Capital Movements by Service

Service: Adults, Ageing & Wellbeing – Forecast variance (£1.480) million		
Summary by Project	Under/ Overspend	Reprofiling
	£m	£m
Adult Social Care Capital Fund	-	-
Disabled Facilities Grant	-	(1.078)
Person Centred Care Information System (SWIFT)	-	(0.402)
Sea Lodge Wet Room	-	-
Tynedale House Fire Doors	-	-
Total	-	(1.480)

NOTES - Year End Variances of £0.250 million or more

The main reasons for the forecast variance for Adults, Ageing & Wellbeing are outlined below:

- a. Based on the forecast level of referrals, £1.078 million can be reprofiled to financial year 2024-25.
- b. The contracted payments schedule for the SWIFT system replacement is based on key milestones across the term of the project. As a result, £0.402 million budget is required to be reprofiled to financial year 2024-25. It is anticipated that the project will complete by March 2025.

Service: Chief Executive – forecast variance £ Nil		
Summary by Project	Under/ Overspend	Reprofiling
Project	£m	£m
Fire and Rescue - Fleet	-	-
Fire and Rescue - Equipment	-	-
Fire and Rescue - Berwick Fire Station	-	-
Fire and Rescue - Fire Control and Communication Equipment	-	-
Total	-	-

NOTES - Year End Variances of £0.250 million or more

There are no significant variances to report.

Service: Children, Young People and Education – Forecast variance (£2.057) million		
Summary by Project	Under/ Overspend	Reprofiling
	£m	£m
Basic Needs Programme	-	(0.722)
Children’s Homes Provision	-	(0.500)
High Needs Provision Capital Allocation	0.087	-
Northumberland Skills	(0.119)	-
School Led (Devolved Formula Capital and Energy Efficiency Capital Allocation)	-	(0.025)
Schools Condition Improvement Programme (SCIP)	-	(0.778)
Total	(0.032)	(2.025)

NOTES - Year End Variances of £0.250 million or more

The main reason for the forecast variance for Children’s Services are outlined below:

- a. Basic Needs Programme - The 2023-24 programme includes the relocation of the Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) and the creation of a Mobile Classroom at Cramlington Learning Village. Works are underway and are aiming to complete in year. However, there are no plans to start additional work to be funded out of Basic Need Grant in 2023-24 and so to meet future requirements, reprofiling is needed.
- b. Children’s Homes Provision – The original capital submission was to build two 4-bed residential homes for young people with the opening of one home expected in the Autumn term. A report has since been approved by cabinet to agree a change in strategy involving the purchase of up to six smaller properties creating a multi-sit residential home. Delays to the original profiling are now expected whilst new properties are sought.
- c. Schools Building Programme (SCIP) - Mobile Classroom refurbishment projects are due to complete in 2023-24 at Seaton Sluice Middle School, Bedlington Station Primary School, Felton Primary School and Shilbottle Primary School. No additional mobile classroom projects have been identified through the SCIP programme, therefore £0.675 million will be reprofiled for future projects. SCIP funding of £0.250 million has been earmarked to assist Northumberland Schools with Energy Efficiency Capital Allocation (EECA) projects, of which £0.103 million has been allocated to works being undertaken in 2024-25 and therefore requires reprofiling to meet the programme.

Service: Place and Regeneration – forecast variance (£10.062) million		
Summary by Project	Under/ Overspend	Reprofiling
Project	£m	£m
Members Local Improvement Schemes	-	(0.680)
Affordable Homes Programme	-	(1.813)
Community Housing Fund	-	(0.679)
Borderlands – Carlisle Station	-	(3.461)
Great Northumberland Forest	-	(0.300)
Rural Business Growth Scheme	(0.896)	-
Property Stewardship	-	(0.214)
Cowley Road Depot Refurbishment and Car Park	-	(2.000)
Yourlink Refurbishment	(0.019)	-
Total	(0.915)	(9.147)

NOTES - Year End Variances of £0.250 million or more

The main reasons for the forecast variance for Place and Regeneration are outlined below:

- a. Members Local Improvement Schemes based on estimated levels of expenditure incurred in previous financial years with expenditure tending to increase towards the end of the administration period.
- b. Affordable Homes Programme due to increases in construction prices there have been delays to some projects whilst revised delivery models are prepared.
- c. Community Housing Fund predominantly due to the Berwick Youth Project not proceeding due to difficulties in sourcing match funding. The budget will be required in 2024-25 to support new projects that are currently being developed.
- d. Borderlands – Carlisle Station is behind schedule due to the recent Local Government Reorganisation in Cumbria.
- e. Great Northumberland Forest due to the level of applications received to date and the expected level of payments due to be made in the current financial year. The next funding panel will meet in September to consider new applications.
- f. Rural Business Growth Scheme has underspent due to the level of applications received. There were fewer applications received than originally envisaged due to the requirement of recipients having to find match funding from their own resources and a reluctance for this due to the current economic conditions some businesses operate in. The scheme has now concluded with the final

claims submitted to the funders.

- g. Cowley Road Depot Refurbishment and Car Park has been placed on hold pending the outcome of the depot review. It is envisaged any works will now commence in 2024-25 following the conclusion of the review.

Service: Public Health, Inequalities and Stronger Communities – forecast variance £0.200 million

Summary by Project	Under/ Overspend	Reprofiling
Project	£m	£m
Provision of Leisure Facilities within Morpeth	0.200	-
Total	0.200	-

NOTES - Year End Variances of £0.250 million or more

Overspend due to additional car parking drainage works. Officers are currently reviewing options to fund this from the Essential Leisure Remedial Works budget.

Service: Transformation and Resources – forecast variance (£3.250) million

Summary by Project	Under/ Overspend	Reprofiling
Project	£m	£m
Capital Contract Price Inflation	-	(3.250)
Hardware Infrastructure	0.100	-
IT Backup and Recovery	(0.100)	-
Local Full Fibre Network	(0.029)	-
Community Broadband	0.029	-
Total	-	(3.250)

NOTES - Year End Variances of £0.250 million or more

The main reason for the forecast variance for Transformation and Resources is outlined below:

- a. Capital Contract Price Inflation – £3.250 million is required to be reprofiled due to approvals being granted for the Northumberland Line (£2.000 million) and Prudhoe Water World refurbishment (£1.250 million) in 2024-25.

Items approved from the Council's Contingency

The following items have been approved from the Council's contingency during April to June 2023.

Recurrent Funding	2023-24	2024-25
	£	£
Release of Firefighters' prior year pay award	200,490	200,490
Restructuring adjustment	(18,450)	(18,450)
Total amount drawn from Contingency recurrently	182,040	182,040

Non-Recurrent Funding	2023-24	2024-25
	£	£
Vehicle Livery	16,500	-
Realignment of Housing Benefit budgets	300,800	-
Armed Forces outreach workers	70,460	-
Total amount drawn from Contingency non-recurrently	387,760	-

Movement in the Council's Reserves

	Opening Balance at 1 April 2023*	Movement in Reserve	Commitments	Forecast Closing Balance at 31 March 2024
	£m	£m	£m	£m
General Reserves/Balances				
General Fund	(50.955)	-	-	(50.955)
Total General Reserve	(50.955)	-	-	(50.955)
Ring-Fenced Reserves/Balances				
Housing Revenue Account	(29.147)	-	2.087	(27.060)
Major Repairs (HRA)	(9.855)	-	1.542	(8.313)
HRA Capital Investment	(1.740)	-	1.630	(0.110)
Total Earmarked HRA Reserves	(40.742)	-	5.259	(35.483)
Specific Reserves/Balances				
Capital Grants Unapplied	(63.478)	-	-	(63.478)
Capital Receipts	(0.093)	-	-	(0.093)
Capital Receipts - HRA	(8.237)	-	-	(8.237)
Total Specific Reserves/Balances	(71.808)	-	-	(71.808)

	Opening Balance at 1 April 2023*	Movement in Reserve	Commitments	Forecast Closing Balance at 31 March 2024
	£m	£m	£m	£m
Earmarked Reserves				
ADC Section 106	(0.002)	-	0.002	-
Balances held by Schools	(8.941)	8.341	(6.955)	(7.555)
Borderlands Energy Masterplan	(0.808)	-	0.808	-
Business Recovery Reserve	(2.322)	-	-	(2.322)
Collection Fund Smoothing	(1.944)	-	1.944	-
Community Led Housing	(0.605)	-	0.071	(0.534)
Contain Outbreak Management	(0.260)	0.260	-	-
Council Commissioned Services	(7.520)	-	7.352	(0.168)
Council Transformation Fund	(17.144)	-	3.051	(14.093)
Council Tax Hardship & Discount Scheme	(6.588)	-	5.324	(1.264)
Dedicated Schools Grant	(4.501)	-	2.888	(1.613)
Economy & Regeneration Investments	(0.050)	-	0.050	-
Empty Dwelling Management Order	(0.077)	-	(0.017)	(0.094)
Estates Rationalisation	(6.257)	0.037	2.350	(3.870)
Exceptional Inflationary Pressures	(1.017)	-	1.017	-
FPF Admin Grant	(0.033)	-	-	(0.033)
FRS HMICFRS Improvement	(0.026)	-	0.018	(0.008)
Firefighters' Immediate Detriment	(0.200)	-	0.100	(0.100)
Food Waste	(0.058)	-	0.058	-
Haltwhistle Repairs Reserve	(0.036)	-	-	(0.036)
Highways Commuted Maintenance Funds	(1.127)	0.054	-	(1.073)
Highways Maintenance Investments	(0.225)	-	0.225	-
Home for Ukraine	(4.586)	-	4.586	-

	Opening Balance at 1 April 2023*	Movement in Reserve	Commitments	Forecast Closing Balance at 31 March 2024
	£m	£m	£m	£m
Insurance	(7.822)	-	0.500	(7.322)
Legal Challenge	(1.071)	-	0.172	(0.899)
NCC Economic Regeneration	(0.138)	-	0.138	-
Open Spaces Maintenance Agreements	(0.094)	-	0.013	(0.081)
Parks and Green Spaces	(0.250)	-	-	(0.250)
Planning Delivery	(1.078)	-	0.545	(0.533)
Problematic Empty Properties	(0.047)	-	0.016	(0.031)
Recruitment & Retention	(0.439)	-	0.010	(0.429)
Regeneration Additional Capacity Reserve	(0.405)	-	-	(0.405)
Regeneration Development Reserve	(2.952)	-	1.602	(1.350)
Repair and Maintenance	(0.250)	-	-	(0.250)
Replacement of Defective Street Lanterns	(2.930)	-	-	(2.930)
Restructuring Reserve	(0.838)	0.014	0.101	(0.723)
Revenue Grants	(20.353)	6.561	2.355	(11.437)
School Libraries	(0.007)	-	-	(0.007)
Sealodge	(0.010)	-	-	(0.010)
Section 106	(14.697)	-	(0.050)	(14.747)
Severe Weather	(7.500)	-	5.000	(2.500)
Social Fund	(0.493)	-	0.120	(0.373)
Sports Development	(0.297)	-	0.010	(0.287)
Storm Arwen	(0.193)	-	0.193	-
Strategic Management Reserve	(49.708)	-	12.812	(36.896)
Transformation of the Revenues & Benefits Service	(0.215)	-	0.060	(0.155)
Violence Reduction	(0.039)	-	0.039	-

	Opening Balance at 1 April 2023*	Movement in Reserve	Commitments	Forecast Closing Balance at 31 March 2024
	£m	£m	£m	£m
Winter Services	(2.000)	-	-	(2.000)
Women's Safety in Public Places	(0.022)	-	0.022	-
Total Earmarked Reserves	(178.175)	15.267	46.530	(116.378)
Total Usable Reserves	(341.680)	15.267	51.789	(274.624)

	Opening Balance at 1 April 2023*	Movement in Provision	Commitment s	Forecast Closing Balance at 31 March 2024
	£m	£m	£m	£m
Provisions				
Redundancy	(0.545)	0.031	0.514	-
NNDR Appeals	(5.212)	-	(1.750)	(6.962)
Estates Rationalisation Project	(0.577)	-	0.450	(0.127)
Compensation Claims	(0.080)		0.042	(0.038)
Contractor Claims	(0.330)	-	0.330	-
Total Provisions	(6.744)	0.031	(0.414)	(7.127)
Total Reserves & Provisions	(348.424)	15.298	51.375	(281.751)

*Provisional un-audited opening balance figure

Virements April to June 2023

Directorate	Reason for Virement	Virement from	Virement to	£
There were no virements to report.				

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Northumberland County Council

CORPORATE SERVICES AND ECONOMIC GROWTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

25 September 2023

Northumberland Lottery Update

Report of Councillor Richard Wearmouth, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services

Executive Director: Jan Willis, Executive Director of Transformation & Resources
(Section 151 Officer)

Purpose of report

The purpose of this report is to provide the Corporate Services and Economic Growth Overview and Scrutiny Committee with an update on the performance of the Northumberland Lottery which was launched on 25 April 2020 following approval by Cabinet on 6 August 2019.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the contents of the report are noted.

Link to Corporate Plan

The Lottery provides a source of additional funding for local community groups, supporting the resilience of the voluntary and community sector, which links to the economic growth priority in the Corporate Plan 2023 - 2026.

Key issues

Implementation of the Northumberland Lottery enables income from ticket sales to be apportioned between approved local community groups and the Council. To date the lottery has raised £134,231 for registered causes in the community.

Background

1. Northumberland County Council in collaboration with Gatherwell Ltd (an External Lottery Manager) operates an online lottery which contributes 50p of every £1 ticket sold to whichever local good cause the ticket player has chosen to support.
2. Community groups and registered charities apply to join the Lottery via the Council's branded lottery website at <https://www.northumberlandlottery.co.uk/>
3. Once approved by the Council, organisations are provided with their own branded page within the site and provided with regular updates, and bespoke marketing materials to help promote the lottery.
4. The groups/charities then retain 50% of all ticket sales generated via their web page. This is paid to them on a monthly basis directly via Gatherwell and provides a regular income stream (subject to ticket sales).

Costs

5. Community groups do not incur any costs. All running costs are met within the 17p administration contribution from the ticket sales.
6. The Lottery website states that 'at least 60% from each ticket sold goes to support Northumberland which is made up of 50p + 10p as detailed below.

£1 Ticket Sale	Recipient
50p	Selected local community groups (chosen by the player)
10p	Central Council fund and on-going annual gambling licence fees and excess to contribute to Community Chest
17p	Gatherwell Administration Fee
20p	Prize Fund
3p	VAT

7. For the financial year ending 2023, £6,152 was transferred to the Council's community chest. The costs of operating the Lottery are deducted from ticket sales and covers set up costs and licence fees etc. The total cost for 2022-23 was £1,541.

Compliance and Performance

8. The lottery is managed via Gatherwell's online platform, with the Council providing oversight and governance in accordance with the following policies including:
 - Website Terms & Conditions and Complaints Procedure
 - Social Responsibility in Gambling Policy
 - Anti Money Laundering Risk Assessment
 - Protection from Source of Crime and Disorder Policy
 - Fair and Open Gambling Policy
 - Children and Vulnerable Persons Protection Policy
9. The number of tickets purchased is limited to 20 tickets per transaction, and Gatherwell issues gambling awareness advice to any player who attempts to exceed this amount to ensure individuals cannot buy excessive numbers of tickets. Gatherwell has confirmed that currently the highest number of tickets 1 player has is 11.
10. Validation checks are also in place to ensure that no player under the age of 16 can play. With effect from 1 October 2023, the legal age to play will change to 18 (in line with Government recommendations) and the Council's website and system processes are currently being updated to implement this change.
11. In spite of the pandemic and cost of living crisis, the lottery has continued to remain beneficial to the community, attracting new community groups, and although ticket sales and the number of players between April 2022 and February 2023 began to fall these numbers are once again starting to increase. (See appendix 1).
12. In May 2023 Gatherwell successfully underwent its annual security audit, a licence requirement of the Gambling Commission which independently assesses the remote technical standards of Gatherwell's operations; this audit covers all operations carried out on the Council's behalf.

Conclusion

13. It is considered that the Northumberland Lottery provides a much-needed source of additional funding for local community groups, raising a total of £134,231 to date and that appropriate controls are in place to manage risk.

Implications

Policy	As detailed in the report
Finance and value for money	The costs and revenue streams associated with the Northumberland Lottery are detailed within the report.
Legal	The Council must comply with the requirements of the Gambling Commission Licence (Gambling Act 2005). Within the Gambling Act 2005, there are 8 categories of permitted lotteries, one of which is a local authority lottery
Procurement	N/A
Human Resources	N/A
Property	N/A
Equalities (Impact Assessment attached) Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	N/A
Risk Assessment	N/A
Crime & Disorder	Crime & Disorder policy supports the Scheme as detailed in the report at section 7.
Customer Consideration	A suite of policy documents support the Scheme as detailed in the report at section 7.
Carbon reduction	N/A
Health and Wellbeing	N/A
Wards	All wards in Northumberland.

Background papers:

Cabinet Report [6th August 2019](#)

Report sign off

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

	Full Name of Officer
Director of Law & Corporate Governance (Monitoring Officer)	Neil Masson obo Stephen Gerrard
Executive Director of Transformation & Resources (S151 Officer)	Jan Willis
Relevant Executive Director	Jan Willis
Chief Executive	Helen Paterson
Portfolio Holder	Richard Wearmouth

Author and Contact Details

Pam Hindhaugh

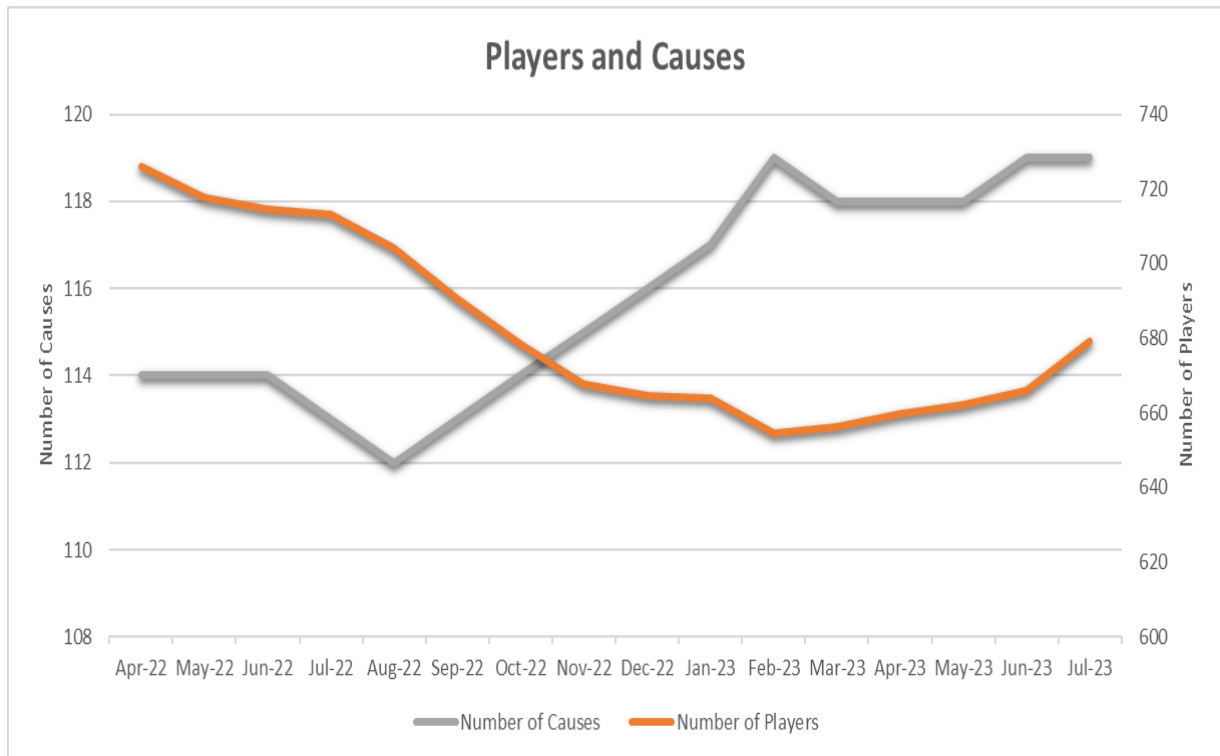
Head of Corporate Commissioning and Procurement

Telephone: 07976 886600

pam.hindhaugh@northumberland.gov.uk

Summary of Performance to Date

Statistics	Total
Number of fully registered community groups	119
Number of players	679
Total income for community groups	£134,231
Total NCC income	£27,956
No of draws	171
No of winning tickets	4,834
Prizes of £25,000	0
Prizes of £2,000 won	2
Prizes of £250 won	47
Prizes of £25 won	485



Registered Community Groups

1st Alnwick Rainbows
1st Cresswell, Ellington, Linton, and Lynemouth Scout Group
1st Hexham Scout Group
1st Wylam Scout Group
3rd & 5th Cramlington Scout Group
3rd Newbiggin Scouts
Acomb County First School PTA
Allendale Pre School
Aln Valley Railway Trust
Alnwick Community Trust
Amble Development Trust
Barnabas Safe & Sound
Bedlington Squadron RAF Air Cadets
Bell View (Belford)
Belsay Daycare
Berwick Community Trust
Berwick Rangers Juniors
Berwick Youth Project
Blyth Man Shed
Blyth Wildlife Rescue
Border Links Ltd
Briardale House Youth and Community Projects
BRIC
Calmer Therapy
Calmer Therapy Berwick Branch
Cambois Amateur Rowing Club
Carers Northumberland
Choices4Growth CIC
Choppington Disability Group
Chrysalis Club Tynedale
Citizens Advice Northumberland
Cowpen Quay Community Association (The Buffalo Community Centre)
Cramlington and District Red Squirrel Group
Cramlington United Football Club
Creighton Memorial Hall
Cycling Without Age Prudhoe
Dogs First

Dragon Tale Theatre Group
Ellington Colliery Band
ESCAPE Family Support
Felton Junior's Football Club
Friends of Eastwoods Park
Friends of Gallagher Park
Friends of Hexham Priory School
Friends of Morpeth Museum
Girl Guiding Tynedale East Division
Glendale Agricultural Society
Glendale Connect
Haltwhistle Little Star
Happy Faces Prudhoe
Headway Arts
Heddon United Football Club
Henshaw Nursery
Hexham First School PTA
Holding Hearts Therapeutic Services CIC
Jessica's Sarcoma Awareness
Journey Enterprises
Koast Radio
Linton Lions Bowling Club
Little Oaks Nursery, Acomb CIO
MIND Active
MND Association Northumberland Group
Morpeth Riding for the Disabled
Natural Ability
NE Youth
New Delaval Knights Bowling Club
Newbiggin Arts Centre
Newbiggin Heritage Partnership
North Northumberland Voluntary Forum
Northumberland County Bowling Association Three-A-Side
Northumberland Domestic Abuse Services
Northumberland Lottery Community Fund
Northumberland National Park Foundation
Northumberland National Park Mountain Rescue Team
Northumberland Pride

Northumbria Blood Bikes
November Club
Oswin Projects
Pegswood Community Hub
Prudhoe ATC Squadron 1248
Prudhoe Castle First School PTA
Prudhoe Youth Project
Real Deal Plus
Riding Mill Cricket Club
Rothbury Bowling Club
Sea the Change
Seaton Sluice Football Club
Seaton Sluice Public Access Defibrillator Support Group
South Tynedale Railway Preservation Society
St Mary's Village Hall
Stakeford Juniors Community FC
Stakeford Scout Group
Stannington WW2 Battle of Britain Event Group
Tanga Club
The Glendale Gateway Trust
The Hextol Foundation
The Isabella Community Centre
The Maltings
The Royal British Legion, Blyth
Tyne Rivers Trust
Tynedale Rotary
Tyneside and Northumberland Mind
Tyneside Gymnastics Club
WATBus
We Can
Wooler Bowling and Sports Club
Wooler Young People's Association

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Northumberland County Council

Corporate Services and Economic Growth Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Date: 25 September 2023

Annual Update Report for Workforce (2022/23)

Report of Sarah Farrell, Director of Workforce and OD

Cabinet Member: Councillor Richard Wearmouth, Deputy Leader

1. Purpose of the Report

The purpose of this report is to:

- Provide an annual position statement in relation to strategic workforce related areas of assurance, workstreams/associated action plans and progress to date within key areas for Northumberland County Council for the full financial year of 2022/23.
- Provide assurance to the Corporate Services and Economic Growth Overview & Scrutiny Committee that there is provision and monitoring in place to achieve necessary Key Performance Indicators relating to the workforce on an ongoing basis.
- Provide elected members with an overview of the strategic direction for the Council's workforce related matters.
- Provide elected members with an overview of the monitoring and actions taken during the period from 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023 in accordance with the Council's Whistleblowing Policy for employees. Members are asked to note that other aspects of Whistleblowing which are not employee related are logged and maintained by the Council's Monitoring Officer.

2. Recommendations

The recommendations are:

- Corporate Services and Economic Growth Overview & Scrutiny Committee note the contents of the report.
- Corporate Services and Economic Growth Overview & Scrutiny Committee continue to receive an annual update of this report for every financial year.
- Note the data that is contained in the whistleblowing report and the ongoing work to promote a safe environment for staff to raise concerns through various mechanisms across the Council.
- Support the continued use of Safecall across the Council as an additional mechanism for staff to raise concerns accordingly.

3. Links to the Corporate Plan

The Northumberland County Council (NCC) Corporate Plan (2023-26) has identified a number of core strategic priorities and supporting key themes of which the following are particularly relevant to the workforce:

- We want to attract more and better jobs (Driving Economic Growth, Tackling Inequalities)
- We want you to feel safe, healthy, and cared for (Tackling Inequalities)
- We want you to achieve and realise your potential (Driving Economic Growth, Tackling Inequalities)
- We want you to love where you live (Driving Economic Growth)
- We want you to have access to the things you need (Tackling Inequalities, Driving Economic Growth, Value for Money)
- We want to be efficient, open and work for everyone (Value for Money)

HR/OD have also published an Annual Governance Statement that is reviewed and updated annually as part of our ongoing governance arrangements.

4. Context

An integral part of the Council's success in delivering high quality services to the population of Northumberland relies upon the effective deployment of the workforce of the Council. This report gives an overview of employment and workforce related issues occurring during 2022/23.

4.1 Current workforce data (as at 31/03/2023)

The Council employs 5,137 staff (headcount) and 4,583.66 FTE – excluding schools.

The number of staff employed in schools by Northumberland County Council is 3973 staff (headcount) and 2573.57 FTE (as at 31/03/23). For the purposes of this report the HR/OD performance only relates to NCC directly employed staff as schools have their own governance structures managed through their governing bodies although the Council makes available a schools HR/OD advisory service to which schools may subscribe if they wish.

Labour turnover for 22/23 is 11.47% which has decreased from the previous year (13%). The total figure is lower than the LGA reported average of 14% labour turnover rate nationally (LGA Workforce survey 2021/22¹).

5. Operation and impact of the HR/OD service in 2022/23

5.1 Delivery of the People Strategy (2021-2024)

The current HR/OD People strategy contains the following themes and workstreams:

- Enriched Experience
- Health, Wellbeing & Selfcare
- Planning our People for the Future
- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion for Everyone
- Systems Innovation and Automation

¹ Latest available figures through the LGA inform benchmarking reports.

Within each of the 5 strategic themes there are core actions/objectives. These were intended to be the focus of delivery over a four-year period leading up to May 2025. In every aspect of this strategy, corporate values were embedded which were:

- Residents first
- Excellence and quality
- Respect
- Keeping our communities safe and well

NCC determined the response to working in a post pandemic environment would be referred to as 'WorkSmart – It's what you do, not where you do it!'

Our strategic aim was to integrate the WorkSmart philosophy throughout every element of the People strategy, ensuring our practices allowed our staff to have the best working experience, which we believe in turn will have positive impacts on the services we deliver to our local residents.

Human activity is cited as the main cause of climate change, it is important that our People strategy seeks to mitigate the environmental impact of our employees' activities. Our strategic aim is to ensure that NCC takes 'a climate conscious approach' to delivery of the strategy.

In 2022/23 the strategy workstreams have operated as follows:

Workstream 1- Enriched Experience

What have we achieved in 22/23?

The Council has invested heavily in engaging staff. Some initiatives and work practices include:

- Development of a coaching programme.
- Support to 9 Staff Network Groups including LGBT+, Mental Wellbeing, Menopause, Carers, Enable, Race Equality, ASD, Armed Forces and Apprenticeships.
- Staff survey – the previous staff survey was held in 2019, pre-covid, before the most recent survey conducted in October 2022. The Council achieved an 51.78% response rate in 2022. The Executive team agreed a survey plan of full staff survey to be held every 18 months so there is time to take action on responses. In between, shorter pulse surveys will be taken every 6 months to keep track on general feeling of staff.
- Introduction of smarter working guidelines to support staff and allow them to feel engaged wherever they are as part of WorkSmart. County Hall 're-opened' teams in April 2022.
- Staff awards to recognise our excellent people and to publicly demonstrate our pride in the services they deliver.
- Engaged with network groups to get feedback on HR policy when revised
- Corporate Social responsibility – highlighting the ability to volunteer in the community and providing time off work to do so. Highlighted within induction and manager induction.
- Enabled feedback from starters and leavers of the organisation – revised questionnaires to obtain data to illustrate reasons for joining/leaving.

What is there yet to achieve?

- Continue to progress positive outcomes from staff survey action plans
- Respond appropriately and proactively to staff survey results including working with staff survey action plan lead officers, assist directors and heads of service in delivering positive change and deliver action plan workshops with specific teams involving all staff in a 'safe space' to deliver improvement through consultation
- Create better relationships with our hard-to-reach groups
- Greater utilisation and further expansion of our established network groups

- Improve employee satisfaction scores
- Feed into wellbeing initiatives that will result in greater levels of engagement
- Try to encourage staff to feel a sense of belonging to the Council. We want staff to want to do their best for the Council
- Become an employer that invests in our staff, creating commitment and loyalty
- Effective recruitment and development of future employees and leaders through leadership development, mentoring, coaching, apprenticeship programmes and sustainable careers.

What does success look like?

Employee engagement is a difficult metric to measure. However, in achieving our objectives we would expect to see:

- A boost to our employee satisfaction scores
- Digitisation and improved accessibility for all employees
- Employees talking positively about the Council, borne out in public forums like Glass Door
- Better employee metrics like lower turnover, lower sickness rates, better recruitment fill rates
- Our staff feel positive about their own development and look for opportunities to advance and grow
- Staff who want to innovate and create. Engaged employees come forward with suggestions and improvements
- A successful 'grow your own' programme that invests in the development of key staff at all levels.
- Engaging effectively with our employees at every stage of the employment journey from induction to exit.
- Create an environment where employees feel safe, empowered, cared about and able to speak up and challenge
- Employees are satisfied with their employee benefit package and their terms and conditions

Workstream 2 - Health, Wellbeing & Selfcare

What have we achieved in 22/23?

- Continued Ambassador Status from The Better Health @ Work Awards, gaining "continuing excellence" in 2022.
- Established virtual initiatives through Facebook and other virtual platforms (Staff Virtual Sports & Social Club, Calm Space, Big Sing, Buddy Scheme, Long Covid support, CEV/Shielding Drop in, Instructor live, Mental Wellbeing Surgeries for Line Managers & Staff Photography, Gardening, Climate Change & Netball Clubs). These provide a space for employees to interact with their colleagues, away from 'work', to have light relief, fun, as well as a hugely welcomed 'safe space.' They are supported by Senior Management who have recognised the important value they add to the organisation.
- Created our Staff Health & Wellbeing Portal on SharePoint so that staff can easily access all health & wellbeing support available:
<https://northumberland365.sharepoint.com/sites/HealthandWellbeing>
- Increased financial wellbeing support, and other resources that staff may not have accessed previously such as couch to financial fitness, budget calculators & direct support pathway to CAB as well as low interest loans from Northumberland Community Bank.
- Partnered with external organisations such as MIND, NUFC Foundation, Northumbria Healthcare, Occupational Health and gambling/ alcohol experts to provide wide range of activities, events and challenges, alongside tips and techniques, and innovative tools and resources to support staff.

- Worked with specific service areas to provide bespoke H&W opportunities within Team meetings and Wellbeing themed sessions including Mental Wellbeing Training for Line Managers, Laughter Yoga & Mindfulness.
- Campaigned to raise awareness - Men's Health Week, Carers Week, Mental Health Awareness, International Women's Day and Money Talks Week.
- Implemented a new H&W offer for Elected Members
- Use of Psychological Wellbeing Co-ordinator by staff to support wellbeing when case is not clinical.
- Achieved Mindful Employer Status for the next two years (2022 –2024),
- Embedded Health in All Policies (HIAP) – in partnership with Public Health, Workforce Committee, and external partners. Support positive health impact across all policies and decision making, in particular HR policy.
- Built into HR Policy process Health in all Policies to ensure all HR policy provision includes Wellbeing
- Increased Bereavement support using chaplaincy service
- Linked wellbeing with WORKSMART project to support staff having difficulty with change
- Signed of North of Tyne Good work Pledge to ensure work within the organisation promotes wellbeing of staff.
- Highlight the importance of the role team managers play in supporting H, WB & SC across the workforce. Actively support, enable, and engage with managers to ensure they feel empowered to support their teams. Set up manager sessions to support staff wellbeing.
- Employability skills standard offer to allow for work experience, pre apprenticeship

What is there yet to achieve?

- To become an exemplar of Health, Wellbeing and Self-care good practice
- To build on the success of campaigns, and promote engagement across the organisation
- Greater focus on wider determinants of wellbeing, promoting positive lifestyle choices and avoiding negative coping strategies such as alcohol & drugs
- Futureproof our provision with a robust digital offer to improve health literacy, equality of access, variety, and innovation.
- Expand our successful Health & Wellbeing Champion structure to further scope and capacity.

What does success look like?

- A Health, Wellbeing and Self-care offer which promotes, supports, and provides access to health and wellbeing equally to all our staff.
- Prioritisation of mental wellbeing and focus on a supportive recovery, improving resilience and practising self-care
- Health driven positive policies with a key focus on wellbeing, equality, and diversity
- Increased positive ratings, via staff survey, of how our workforce view their own health and wellbeing, evidenced by reduced sickness levels.
- Improved levels of staff engagement, increased awareness, and recognition of the importance of Health, Wellbeing and Self-care across all services within the council
- Improved/stable sickness absence rates.

Workstream 3 - Planning our People for the Future

What have we achieved in 22/23?

- Review and refresh of required learning
- Increase in virtual training offer, maximising use of e-learning, virtual classroom, and webinar formats

- Development of Smarter Working guidance for staff and managers responding to more agile staff working arrangements
- Development of manager induction training and HR Policy into Practice Briefings for Managers
- Development of virtual face to face recruitment events for apprenticeships
- Developed Staff bank to reduce agency spend
- Established LEAN process for effective administration of virtual and blended learning events, using Learning Together to full potential
- Develop climate change module to support NCC priorities
- Delivery of a recruitment and retention strategy in order to address critical workforce shortages

What is there yet to achieve?

- Development of Talent management and progression pathways linking to succession planning, apprenticeships, training and continuing professional development.
- Matching the skills and equipping our workforce for the evolving landscape of service delivery
- Ensuring that our hybrid working is fit for purpose
- Delivery of the recruitment strategy that will address skills shortfall and attract the best talent
- Widening the use of organisational development support within the organisation

What does success look like?

- A future proof workforce to ensure excellence and quality in service delivery
- A plan/do/review model embedded to assess the impact and effectiveness of new workforce initiatives
- Mapping of workforce planning activity against the service planning cycle.
- A whole-organisation approach to our learning and development provision, ensuring effective spend through centralisation of the training budgets.
- An effective process of identification of training needs through supervision, appraisal and service planning (Golden Thread) matched with environment-scanning to ensure staff are prepared for impact of national, regional and local initiatives

Workstream 4 - Equality, Diversity & Inclusion for Everyone

What have we achieved in 22/23?

- Establishment and further embedding of staff network groups to create the opportunity for employees with specific lived experiences, and their allies, to have a safe space for open and honest communication. Networks provide support and create a platform to share ideas and feedback to the organisation. The organisation listens to this feedback and the work of the network groups is endorsed and supported at the highest level of the organisation. The network groups contribute to the development of employment policies through commenting on policies pre-policy sub-group
- Cited as one of the best local authorities in the country in the Gender Pay Gap reporting process. The mean gender pay gap in hourly pay as a percentage for NCC is -0.59% which means that the hourly rate for men is 0.59% below the hourly rate for women; in simple terms, women within the organisation get paid narrowly more than men. In 2021/22, the average hourly rate for men was 1.41% greater than women.
- Adapted a wide range of our learning to virtual delivery ensuring access for employees working in various locations and/or with different working patterns as well as refining our ED&I training programmes to reflect current best practice

- Developed a high level of employee engagement in response to our wide range of E, D & I campaigns and initiatives e.g., Pride Month, Black History month, LGBTQ+ month, Men's Health and Mental health Weeks to name but a few.
- Delivery of Bystander Training – empowering employees to address and prevent harassment and discrimination in the workplace. Providing employees with the right knowledge, tools and motivation to intervene in a safe way

What is there yet to achieve?

- To be considered the best and most inclusive employer
- To attract talent from outside of our region and recognise the importance of employing a representative workforce
- To have systems and policies in place that enable and support our ambitions
- To ensure equality for all – recognising that we are all different but are also all equal
- To attract, retain and develop the best staff regardless of background, race, ability/disability, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, etc.
- To establish a professional and engaged EDI team working across HR/OD and Public Health and Inequalities.

What does success look like?

- Our senior management teams reflect the demographic spread of our staff groups and act as clear visible role models
- Employees talk passionately around how they 'fit' within the organisation and how they have been supported to be their best selves
- Sense of belonging – increased satisfaction reported through staff surveys, increased employee retention and reduced sickness absence and evidence of equitable staff development
- All employee groups have access to the same communication tools and feedback channels and feel empowered to use them
- We have robust demographic data and information that tells us who our staff are, and that people are open and confident to share this info.
- Staff have confidence to raise concerns and trust that they can do this in confidence – building a culture of acceptance and trust
- Managers are conveyors of our inclusive culture and show accountability and think Equality First
- We have a clear place for employees to go for advice, guidance and support and a clear process in place to hear and respond to their concerns

Workstream 5 - Systems Innovation and Automation

What have we achieved in 22/23?

- Progressed in house development of key systems (i.e., Flexi) including further development of electronic recording of bank holidays
- Developed and enhanced links with IT for support on key areas of work
- Deliver a comprehensive e-learning offer. Most learning can now be delivered virtually
- Update of Therefore system for record keeping
- Review of Oracle use with a view to system optimisation
- Designed and developed a new Applicant Tracking System 'Tribepad'.

What is there yet to achieve?

- Improved systems and access for all
- Better efficiencies in processes
- Easy access, in both directions, between managers and staff through better communication channels
- Better working experience through modern, more efficient systems, reducing time spent on tasks and removing the need to duplicate information

- Better, easier to understand information and reporting functionality
- Improved reputation for attracting new employees and through greater efficiencies, improved reputation and delivery of services for residents
- Inclusivity in reaching all staffing groups
- Cost savings – buying the right products first time that work how they are needed to, or if they can't be found, developing our own in-house solutions.
- Introduction and development of Tribepad

What does success look like?

- New and improved HR systems introduced and used across all areas of HR activity.
- Better value for money and optimised system use.
- Improved reporting in real time to allow managers to make timely and well-informed people management decisions
- Attraction of high-quality candidates and the ability to make sound recruitment decisions
- More engagement with all levels of staff (visible in higher scores in staff survey)
- Higher responsiveness
- Greater productivity and less time wasted
- Greater efficiency
- A happier workforce with lower levels of frustration linked to processes and systems.

5.2 Recognition

Locally, regionally and nationally, the Council's HR/OD team is known for excellent leadership, knowledge and skills and our management support to our HR Schools Team within Northumberland continues with North Tyneside Council which provides significant strength to the service. The Council's HR/OD team regularly share best practice at professional conferences and with colleagues.

During 2022/23 the service has received recognition and praise including:

- Apprentice Of The Year - PPMA 2022
Finalist – Julie Dennitts
- PPMA Rising Star 2022
Highly Commended Ellie Cooper
- CIPD North East Of England Awards 2022
Excellence in Inclusion and Diversity - Shortlisted
- PPMA Excellence In People Management Awards 2022
Work Transformation and Change Initiative – shortlisted
Health & Wellbeing Initiative – shortlisted
Excellence in Service Delivery - shortlisted
- Personnel Today
Change Management – shortlisted
Excellence in Public Sector HR – shortlisted

5.3 Key Projects 2022/23

5.3.1 Living Leader

The Living Leader Programme is a personal leadership programme that has been introduced with the support of the Executive Management team to encourage simple, effective and sustainable leadership. In early 2022 an initial cohort of 14 employees were trained in the programme with a Train the Trainer programme running for 9 staff to cascade through the

organisation. Objectives for the programme are for delegates to experience an increase in self-awareness, to recognise and choose their leadership style, understand principles of successful leadership, develop skills in feedback, personal communication, effective relationships and understand how beliefs impact on behaviours. A dedicated space within County Hall was allocated 2023 and provides a central location for training to take place.

In 2022/23 320 employees were trained through the Living Leader programme. With further licences purchased to allow for continued training cascade in 2023-24.

Directorate	Headcount
Adults, Ageing and Wellbeing	49
Chief Executive Directorate	43
Children, Young People & Education	46
Communities& Business Development Directorate	42
Finance Directorate	59
Fire and Rescue Directorate	6
Planning & Local Services	50
Public Health and Community Services	9
Regeneration Directorate	8
Total	312**

*Please note structure is reflective of that as March 2023

**8 employees have since left NCC

5.3.2 Psychological Well Being Co-ordinator (PWC) role

The PWC role was established in HR/OD during 2022/23. The role was created to assist services in managing individuals with mental wellbeing issues that may reach a clinical intervention threshold. The PWC meets with the individual and provides routes of support, they also provide a report to the relevant manager and then catch up with the individual after 3 months. Feedback has confirmed that this role is welcomed by managers requiring support for staff.

Data for the use of PWC appointments is as follows

Directorate and Service	Apr-22	May-22	Jun-22	Jul-22	Aug-22	Sep-22	Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23	
Adults, Ageing and Wellbeing Directorate Total								12	11	9	11	11	54
Chief Executive Directorate Total								6	3	3	4	6	22
Children, Young People and Education								5	3	4	5	7	24
Place and regeneration								7	5	12	7	9	40

Directorate Total													
Public Health								3	2	2	3	2	12
Transformation and Resources Directorate Total								1	0	0	3	1	5
Grand Total	17	23	32	15	27	26	20	34	24	30	31	36	315

NB data at service level not defined until Nov 22

5.3.3 Flu Vaccinations

Since the COVID 19 pandemic flu vaccines are considered to have increased in perceived significance and importance in order to maintain attendance for staff during the winter season in front facing roles. During 2022/23 there were a total of 29 NCC Flu clinics held in NCC venues throughout the region.

A total of 725 staff attended the NCC clinics which averaged 25 people vaccinated per clinic. A further 435 accessed the NHS hubs for vaccines (via the easy book system) which meant a cumulative total of 1160 staff were vaccinated in 2022/23.

5.3.4 Apprenticeship Campaign

The re-evaluation of our approach to Apprenticeships support in 2022 has produced smaller cohorts that are closely nurtured through their apprenticeship with a view to the service having a role for them following the end of the apprenticeship term. This has reduced the number of apprenticeship cohorts but has allowed NCC to 'grow their own' in a targeted way and with a focus on career pathways. This has also been acknowledged externally with the project winning several external awards that will be highlighted in the 2023-2024 report.

5.3.5 Staff Survey

The first staff survey since 2019 was undertaken using internal systems – further details are given in this report at 6.13 below.

5.3.6 Senior Management Review and Executive Appointments

An assessment centre for the role of Chief Executive took place in October 2022. Subsequent assessment centres for recruitment to the Executive Management team took place in January 2023. All assessment centres were coordinated and facilitated by the HR/OD service.

Following these appointments, the Staffing and Appointments Committee agreed the proposal and resulting appointments to a revised senior management structure in February 2023. Consultation with the affected population took place during February and concluded on 24 March 2023. Implementation of the new structure, supported by HR /OD, took place thereafter.

6.Key Workforce Performance Metrics 2022/23

6.1 Performance Appraisal

During 2022/2023 the final recorded percentage of all staff who had a performance appraisal was 74.64%. This is under the expected level of performance of at least 85% and a decrease from the previous year (86.98%). The appraisal performance indicator has been monitored closely and those managers who did not achieve 85% in 2022/23 have support action plans in

place to ensure that completion rates are met in 2023/24. The HR/OD team are also undertaking a review of the appraisal process with input from colleagues within Policy & Performance and Digital & IT to ensure that any necessary improvements are made and that it remains useful to both employee and manager.

Appraisals required (Headcount)	Appraisals completed (Headcount)	%	Total remaining (Headcount)	%
5137	3834	74.64%	1303	25.36%

Directorate	End of year % achievement
Adult Services Directorate	87.16%
Chief Exec Directorate	77.09%
Children's Services Directorate	67.46%
Communities and Business Development Directorate	78.76%
Finance Directorate	83.50%
Fire and Rescue	65.36%
Planning and Local Services Directorate	75.82%
Public Health and Community Services Directorate	54.57%
Regeneration Directorate	41.38%

6.2 Statutory and Mandatory Training

An annual Corporate Training Needs Analysis (TNA) for all NCC staff has been undertaken and is monitored for compliance to ensure that staff are offered and complete the necessary and relevant training to keep them safe in the workplace.

The 11 core subjects that all employees are required to undertake are as follows:

- Equality and Diversity – 3 yearly refreshers
- Manual Handling awareness – 3 yearly refreshers
- Safeguarding Adults and Children awareness – 3 yearly refreshers
- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) – annual refresher
- Fire Safety awareness – annual refresher
- Health and Safety awareness – one off
- Stress Awareness – one off
- FOI, EIR and SAR refresher – annual refresher
- PREVENT awareness or WRAP – one off
- Infection Prevention and Control - one off
- Introduction to Climate Change – one off

In April 2022 the Climate Change training module added to the above core subjects that all employees are required to undertake as a one-off course to align with Carbon Neutral agenda. Information Governance modules have been updated to reflect the needs of the organisation to comply with governance legislation and from 2022 has become an annual refresher with extra information regarding FOI, EIR and Subject Access information.

The Council's OD team have worked alongside HR colleagues to embed support for talent management and development at all levels across the Council. For 2022/23 we had a successful set of achievements in relation to Statutory and Mandatory Training which has been well embedded across the organisation. The overall final position for the Council as at 31/03/23 is outlined below. The compliance target is set at 85% (95% for GDPR and FOI, SAR, EIR).

Performance Appraisal 22/23	Fire Safety Awareness	General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)	Equality & Diversity	Manual Handling	Safeguarding Adults and Children	Health and Safety Awareness	Stress Awareness	FOI, SAR & EIR	PREVENT or WRAP	Infection Prevention and Control	Introduction to Climate Change
74.64 %	89.68 %	87.54 %	92.68 %	93.67 %	92.19 %	96.67 %	92.89 %	85.65 %	95.89 %	92.45 %	87.13 %

Any compliance/performance issues are raised by the Director of Workforce and OD with the relevant Head of Service.

A review of all statutory and mandatory training has been undertaken in summer 2023 and a revised programme of activity is planned to be implemented with effect from 1 April 2024.

6.3 Personal and Professional Development

The 'About You' review is now embedded across the organisation and we have continued to use this for appraisal to allow managers to have a meaningful conversation with their employees. HR/OD continue to deliver a manager's induction to support newly appointment managers and act as a refresher for longstanding managers. Corporate Induction sessions for new starters continue twice a month. Induction sessions were conducted in an online format during covid but this is to be reviewed and may see reintroduction of face to face sessions.

During 2022/2023 we have re-evaluated our successes with talent management programmes to with a focus on quality rather than quantity, striving towards being an 'employer of choice'.

6.4 Apprenticeships

There are currently just over 650 available apprenticeship standards ranging from Level 1 up to Level 7, 60 different routes are being used within NCC. The Councils Public Service Reporting Percentage of apprenticeship starts excluding schools (both new hires and existing employees) is 2.37%. Public Service Reporting Percentage for maintained schools is 0.48%. The target set is 2.3% so NCC have achieved just above this level (2.37%).

During 2022/2023 we recruited a further 2 cohorts of apprentices. This was before there were restrictions placed on recruitment activity. This pause in recruitment activity allowed us to re-evaluate the numbers NCC would be able to support in following years

Cohorts recruited during 2022/23 include:

- Cohort 6 - 22 new apprentices
- Cohort 7 - 20 new apprentices

Of the 182 employees currently undertaking apprenticeships, levels are made up as follows:

Level 2 = 16%
Level 3 = 43%
Level 4 = 13%
Level 5 = 3%
Level 6 = 17%

Level 7 = 7%

Other activity included:

- Social Worker Apprentices - focus on creating new JD to reflect 'apprentice' post
- Apprenticeship Week 2023 was a great success, we used the 'Skills for Life' theme and worked closely with our colleagues within Communication
- Launched 'Thriving at Work' Campaign, used manager videos talking about having apprentices, upskilling stories from staff, attended events throughout the county, held our own parent & carers information event at County Hall with managers and apprentices, Apprentice takes over twitter for the day and finished with 'selfie Sunday' from apprentices
- Reviewed the processes for recruiting new apprentices and for clear identification of roles suitable to be filled by an apprentice
- Re-evaluated advertising for multiple positions and reasons not being able to recruit
- Recruitment for National Graduate Development Programme (NGDP) Cohort - appointed 2 graduates in September 2022. This process is being refined to include senior executive support and organisational wide placement opportunities.

6.5 HR Case Management

The Council's HR Advisers work on a ratio of 1:500 employees currently and the case profiles for 2022/23 are as follows:

No of cases 2022/23	Adults, Ageing and Wellbeing	Chief Executive Directorate	Children, Young People & Education	Place and Regeneration Directorate	Public Health, Inequalities and Stronger Communities Directorate	Transformation and Resources Directorate	Total
Disciplinary Cases	8	6	23	27	3	4	71
Grievance/ Dignity at Work cases	5	4	5	9	3	1	27
Performance Management cases	0	0	2	2	0	0	4
Health & Wellbeing policy cases	RM1 – 106 RM2 – 37 RM3 – 10 RM4 - 4	RM1 – 40 RM2 – 6 RM3 – 0 RM4 - 1	RM1 – 53 RM2 – 11 RM3 – 8 RM4 - 2	RM1 – 158 RM2 – 39 RM3 – 13 RM4 - 7	RM1 – 44 RM2 – 5 RM3 – 2 RM4 - 0	RM1 – 27 RM2 – 6 RM3 – 2 RM4 - 0	RM1 – 428 RM2 – 104 RM3 – 35 RM4 - 14
Total	170	57	104	255	57	40	683

NB

The previous directorate structure in place for this section of the report.

The Health and Wellbeing policy follows a 4 Review Hearing process – numbers are broken down into the relevant review stages 1-4.

'RM' – Review Meeting

A Case Management system was introduced in 2021/22 for HR Operational cases to allow for better recording of cases, input by all parties involved in the case and time management of cases to ensure all cases are dealt with in timely manner.

6.6 Mediation

NCC mediation supports local resolution before progressing to formal processes. Our mediation offer is a confidential and voluntary process which brings together employees who are experiencing problems in a work-based relationship. Mediation is offered as a service by employee volunteers who are accredited, trained mediators. NCC currently has 20 fully trained mediators from both HR and other services across the council. In 2021/22 we had 2 requests for mediation, one internal that did not lead to a session and an external request from a school which was charged for.

6.7 Coaching

NCC have 33 trained coaches within NCC, 19 of them are presently active taking on assigned clients. In 2022/23 we received 11 nominations for coaching from Council employees that resulted in an average of 3-5 sessions with a coach for career, leadership or personal/professional development. Future provision and direction is being considered as a distinct project under the BEST Talent and Opportunities workstream.

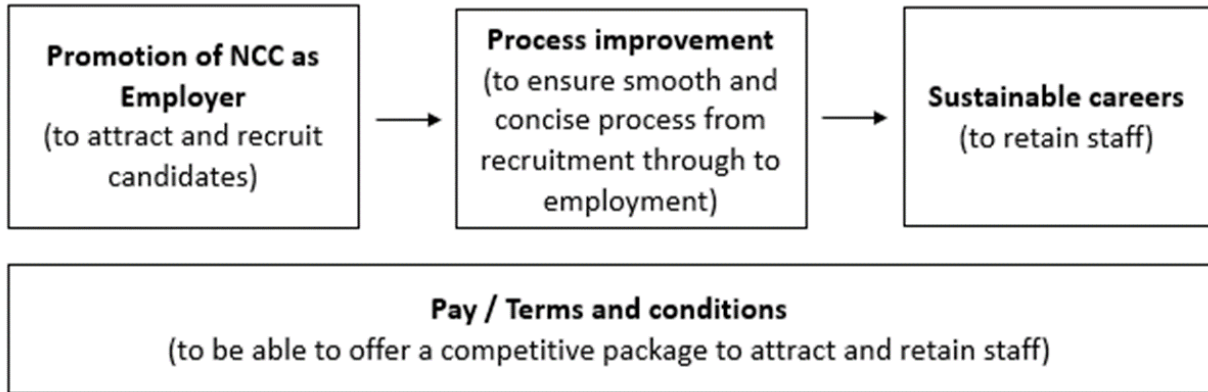
6.8 Recruitment and Retention

Towards the end of the 2021/22 period, it became apparent that there were several service areas across the council suffering significant pressures due to not being able to attract and secure applicants for their vacant roles and/or losing staff to external competitors. A task and finish group was established to address the challenges faced by the Council across 4 workstreams:

- Promotion of NCC as Employer - To attract candidates we need to effectively promote ourselves as an employer of choice. We need to be able to use effective methods and techniques to draw candidates to us and 'sell' our proposition. This commenced in early 2023 so the benefits of the work will be shown in the next annual report.
- Process improvement - To attract and engage candidates we need to have a smooth, concise process with the candidate at the centre. Our processes need to be simple, efficient, responsive and intuitive. We need to understand the user experience and learn from best practice across other organisations. To improve our processes a new Applicant tracking system (ATS) was purchased to replace the Taleo system. The system did not go live until 2023. Reports of applicant information will be available in the next annual report for 23/24.
- Sustainable careers - To attract and retain staff NCC should offer opportunities for rewarding and sustainable careers that benefit both the individual and the organisation. Attention should be particularly focused on sustainability in hard to recruit to areas and

developing talent / skill as an internal resource. This aligns with BEST principles and will be progressed further in 23/24.

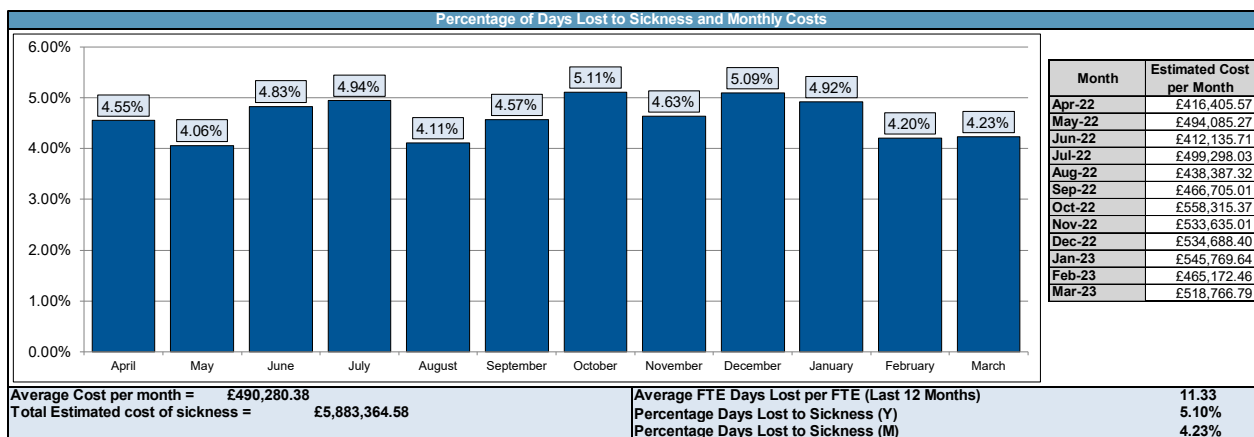
- Pay / Terms and conditions - To be able to attract and retain staff, NCC need to ensure that they offer as competitive employment package as possible. NCC need to be able to respond to shifts in market value for skills whilst maintaining equality and fairness but also ensuring affordability and value for money. This workstream aligns with BEST Value for money principles and will be progressed further in 23/24.



The ‘Promotion of NCC as an employer’ and ‘Process Improvement’ projects have now been fully delivered. The ‘Sustainable Careers’ project and the refocused ‘Reward and Recognition’ project were formally adopted under the BEST Talent and Opportunities workstream in Summer 2023 and at this point the Recruitment and Retention programme was closed.

6.9 Sickness Absence

Sickness absence for 2022/23 had an annual cost of £5.88m which compared to the previous year 2021/22 (£4.68m) is an increase of £1.20m. The average number of FTE lost days per FTE for 2021/22 is 11.33 which compared to the previous year 2021/22 (FTE lost days per FTE were 10.00) is an increase of 1.33 days per FTE. The Council maintains an ambitious aim to achieve a sickness absence level of 7.5 days per FTE.

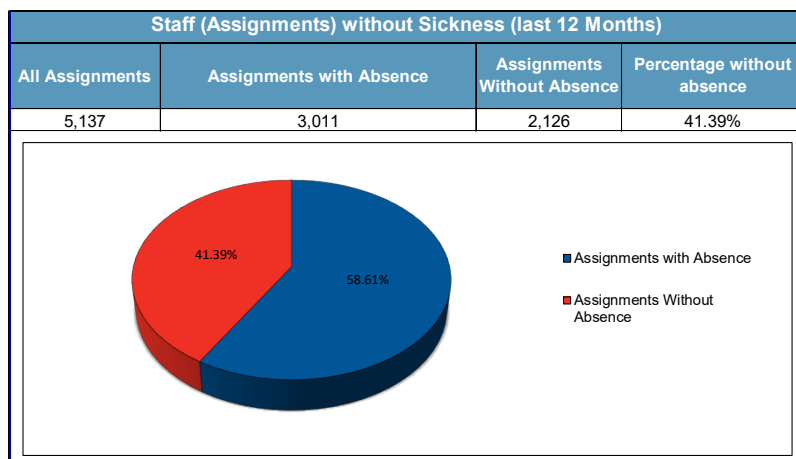


The report highlights specific trends and areas with high absence levels in each service area. Departments are supported to understand their own data and areas discussed to look at how they can best deal with reducing absence. Mental health support is now part of the health and wellbeing process through the routine use of Wellbeing Action Plans and Stress risk

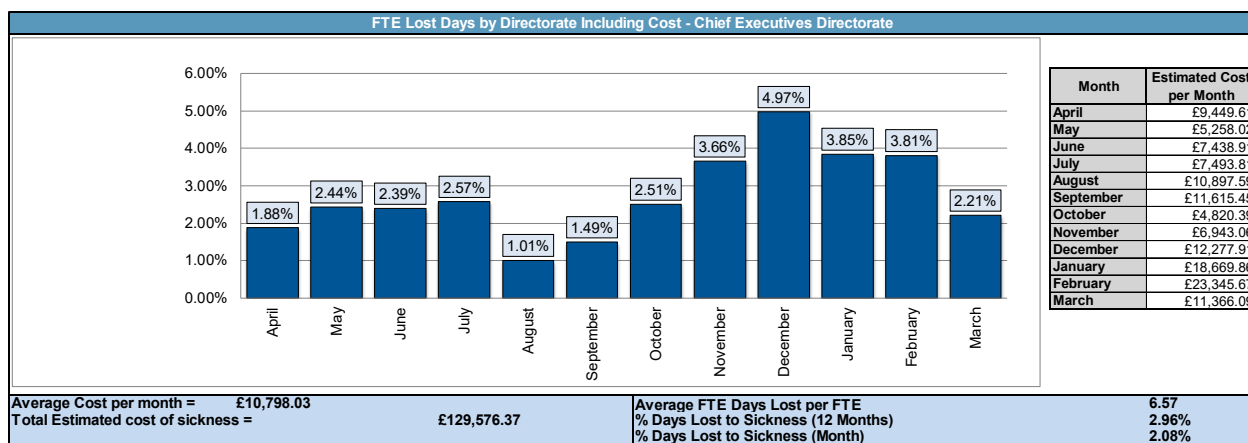
Assessments for employees. A Psychological Wellbeing Coordinator has been in place since December 2021 to support employees facing difficulties that might not require clinical medical support. Questions for managers are included in the supervision proforma to record all aspects of an individual's wellbeing by the manager on a regular basis.

6.9.1 Organisational summary view of sickness absence

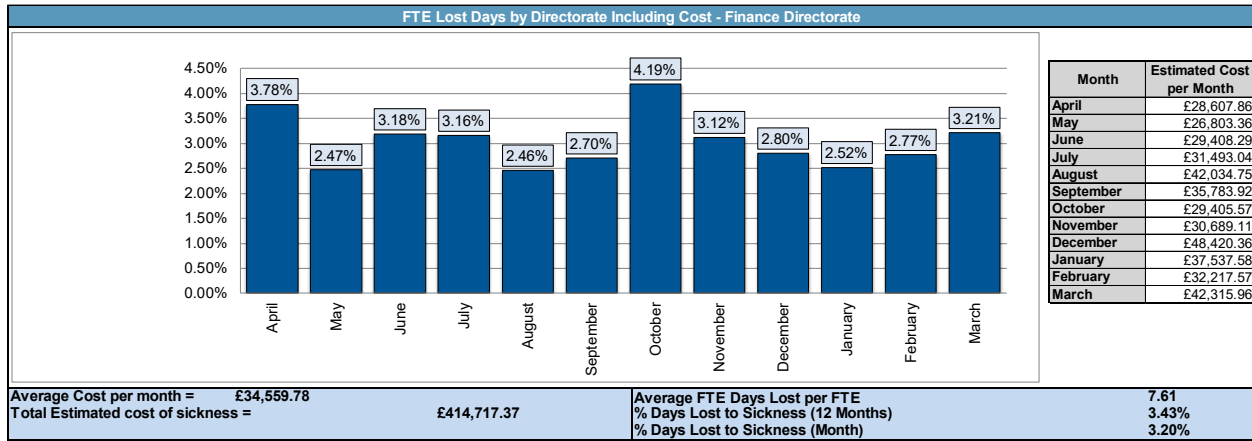
The cost of sickness absence by Directorate (see tables below) similarly shows the greatest areas being Adults, Ageing and Wellbeing and Place and Regeneration where the headcount is significantly higher. It is recognised that 58% of all staff assignments have had some absence due to sickness during the last twelve months (as outlined below) which is the greater than the previous year.



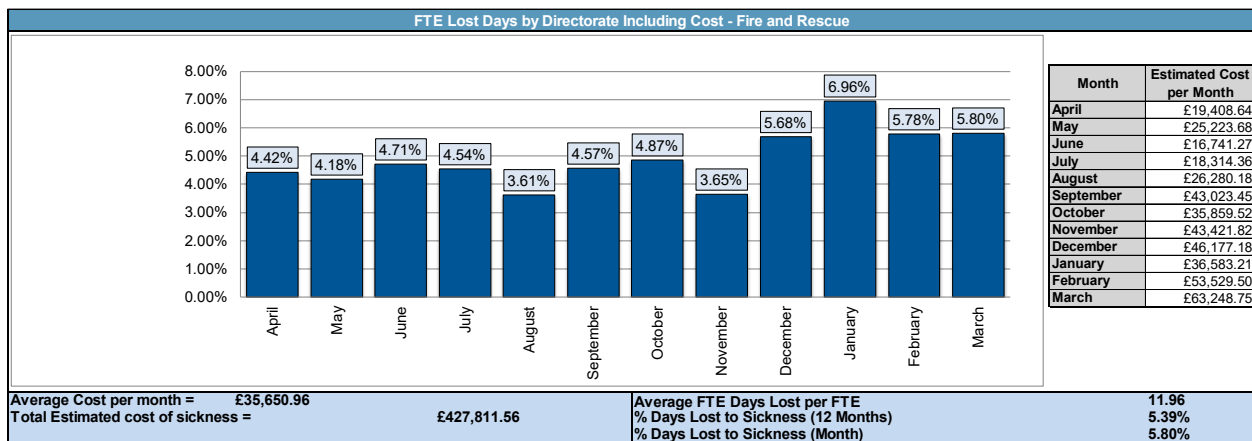
6.9.1.1 Chief Executive Directorate



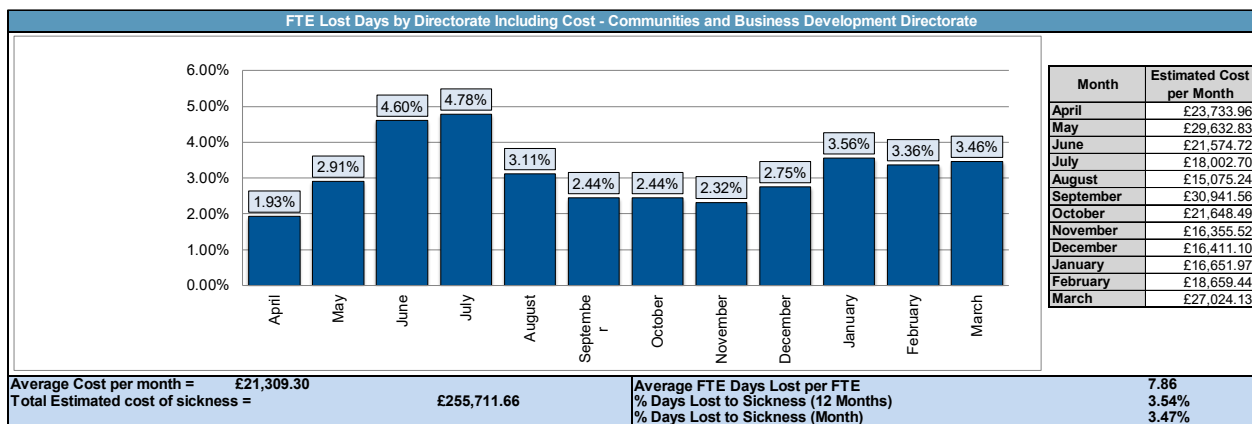
6.9.1.2 Finance Directorate



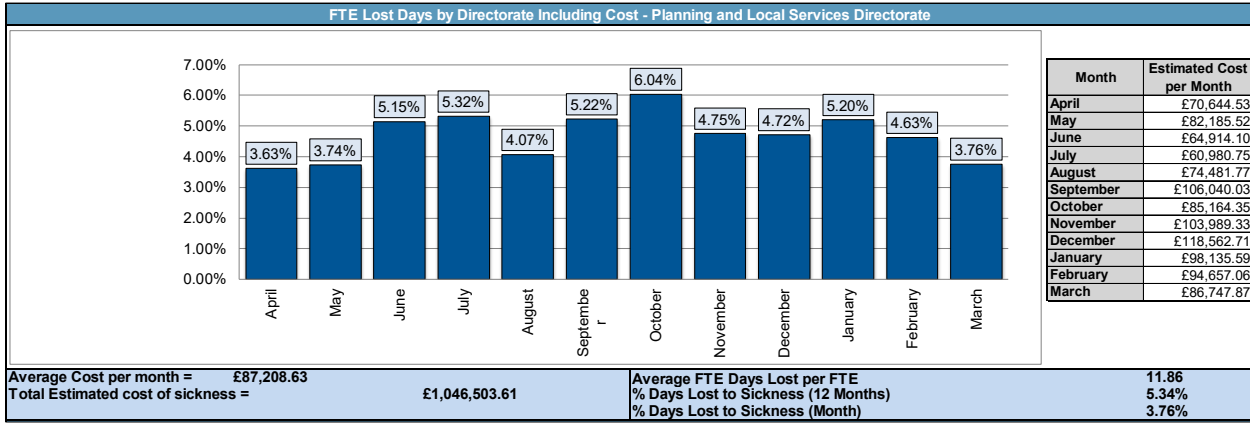
6.9.1.3 Fire and Rescue



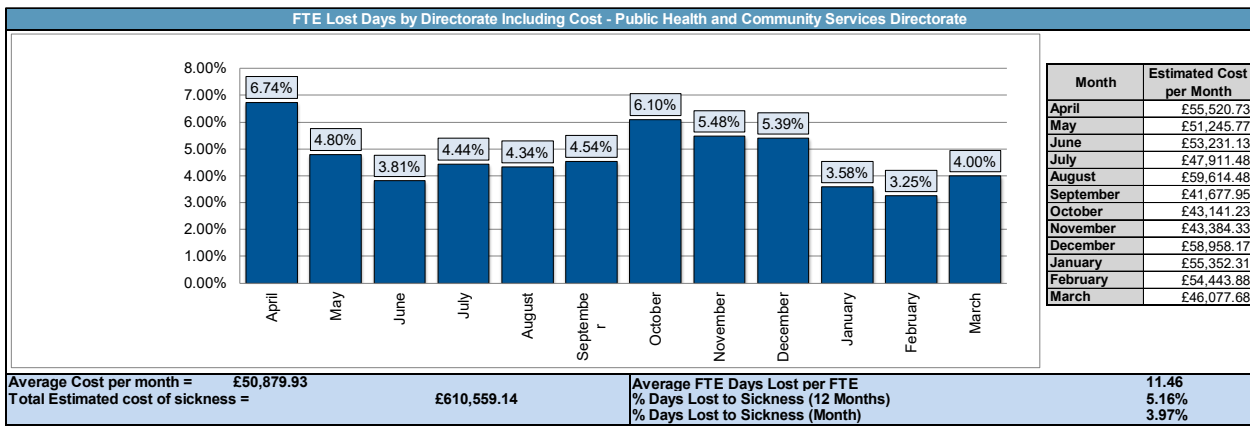
6.9.1.4 Communities and Business Development Directorate



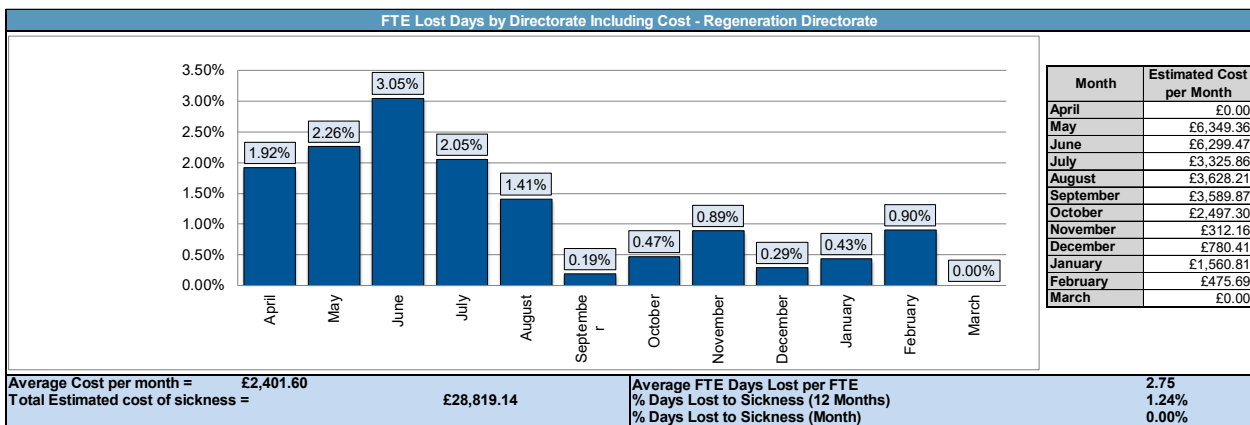
6.9.1.5 Planning and Local Services Directorate



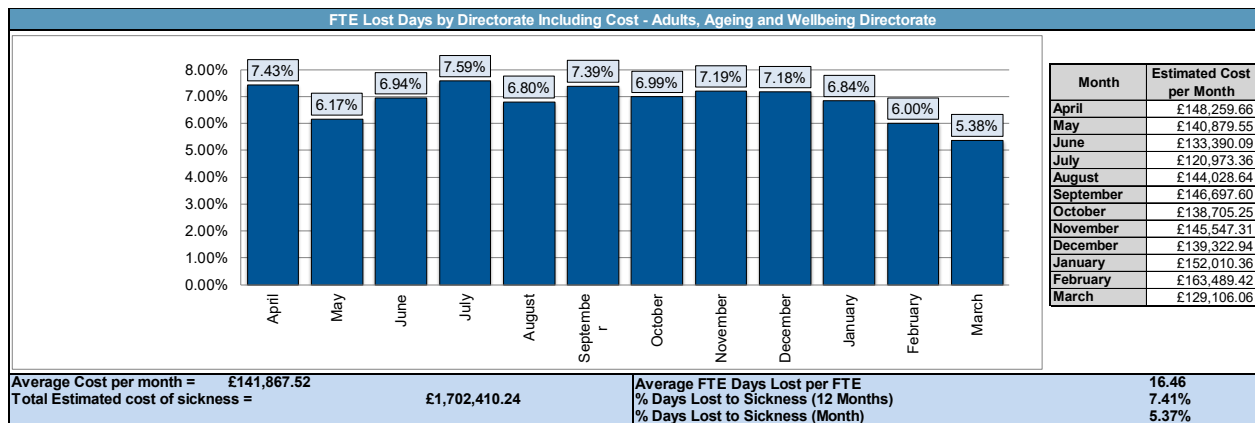
6.9.1.6 Public Health and Community Services Directorate



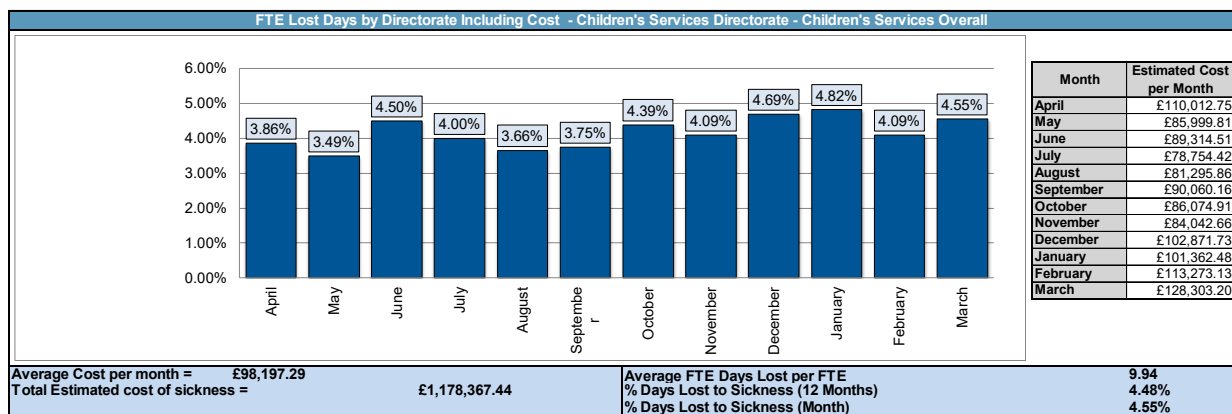
6.9.1.7 Regeneration Directorate



6.9.1.8 Adult's, Ageing and Wellbeing Directorate



6.9.1.9 Children's Services Directorate



6.9.2 Sickness Absence Costs

6.9.3 Sickness Absence Benchmarking - Average Lost FTE Days per FTE

Directorate	Absence costs 22/23	Absence costs 21/22	Ave days lost per FTE 22/23	Ave days lost per FTE 21/22	% days lost to sickness 22/23	% days lost to sickness 21/22
Adult Services	£1,702,410.24	£1,250,771.94	16.46	14.28	7.41%	6.43%
Chief Exec	£129,576.37	£274,389.70	6.98	14.20	2.21	6.39%
Children's Services	£1,178,367.44	£1,086,889.88	9.94	5.09	4.48%	2.29%
Communities and Business Development	£255,711.66	£232,249.60	7.96	7.67	3.47%	3.46%
Finance Directorate	£414,717.37	£277,046.49	7.61	5.09	3.43	2.29%
Fire and Rescue	£427,811.56	£233,767.76	11.96	8.72	5.39%	3.93%
Planning and Local Services	£1,046,503.61	£850,772.25	11.86	7.67	5.34%	3.46%
Public Health and Community Services	£610,559.14	£364,757.07	11.46	9.38	5.16%	4.22%
Regeneration	£28,819.14	£34,291.42	2.75	4.44	1.24%	2.00%

Recommendations arising from the previous year's Cabinet Report were to include benchmarking data from other unitary authorities so that Northumberland could be compared with all English Unitary Authorities. However, the most recent benchmarking data we can access is that of 2021/22².

Year	Northumberland	Minimum for All English unitary authorities	Mean for All English unitary authorities	Maximum for All English unitary authorities
2021/22	10.00	N/A	7.7	N/A
2020/21	8.03	N/A	7.9	N/A
2018/19	11.2	5.4	10.1	13.1

² due to COVID-19 LGA HR benchmarking has been on hold since Q3 19/20 the figures in the report are the latest available figures the LGA have published.

Northumberland compared with CIPFA 'Nearest Neighbours'³

Year	Northumberland	Minimum for Northumberland CIPFA nearest neighbours	Mean for Northumberland CIPFA nearest neighbours	Maximum for Northumberland CIPFA nearest neighbours
2021/22	10.00	N/A	13.3	N/A
2020/21	8.03	7.1	10.20	14.1
2018/19	11.2	9.3	12.2	14.3

³ Northumberland CIPFA nearest neighbours include the following Local Authorities: East Riding of Yorkshire, Wirral, Isle of Wight, Barnsley, Wakefield, Rotherham, Dudley and St. Helens.

The data for previous years does show Northumberland data is towards the lower end of results compared to other authorities.

6.10 HR/OD Helpline

The HR/OD function has operated a helpline for several years to support service areas with workforce queries. The Business Support team are the first point of contact for employees and managers if they are unsure who to contact. We have a supply of FAQs available for staff online with the main topics of enquiry being General HR policy or procedure queries, Learning Together support and financial queries.

Number of enquiries received throughout 2022/23

Directorate	Number of calls	Number of emails	Total enquiries
HR Enquiries	1649	18042	19691
L & OD Enquiries	497	8297	8794
Finance Related enquiries	0	1113	1113
Total	2146	27452	29598

6.11 Agency Staffing and Staff bank

We continue to work with local authority colleagues across the region to ensure we set standardised frameworks and agreed rates, particularly for challenging areas such as social workers etc which has proved positive for the Northeast in managing the challenges that agency staffing costs and quality pose.

The Internal Staffing Bank is now embedded to reduce the requirement for agency workers, offer staff the opportunity to register for work at any department/area within the Council (dependent upon their skills and experience) to ensure we build a more flexible workforce and reduce existing costs over time.

Table to show staff bank activity 2022/23

No. of temporary staffing requests	2021/22	2022/23
Staff Bank	111	131
Agency	490	356

Staff Bank Spend 2022/23		
Directorate	Bank Staff Count	Bank Spend
Adults, Ageing and Wellbeing	35	£244,160
Chief Exec	11	£43,527
Children, Young People and Education	18	£72,300
Fire and Rescue	1	£9,935
Place and Regeneration	47	£335,365
Public Health, Inequalities and Stronger Communities	23	£133,584

Transformation and Resources	12	£90,667
Total	147	£929,537

Agency Spend 2022/23		
Directorate	Agency Staff Count	Agency Spend
Adults, Ageing and Wellbeing	9	£212,735
Chief Exec	2	£102,348
Children, Young People and Education	180	£1,466,294
Fire and Rescue	10	£124,129
Place and Regeneration	196	£2,727,601
Transformation and Resources	5	£121,856
Total	402	£4,754,963

6.12 Fixed Term Contracts

Fixed term contracts are monitored and included in Manager data giving end dates. All fixed term contracts and honoraria must have an end date so payroll will action them in good time. Managers are notified through the Oracle system when a fixed term end date is approaching to prompt action by the manager.

6.13 Equality and Diversity

The Council has very well-established staff networks LGBT, Enable Disability, Autism Spectrum Disorder, Black Asian and Minority Ethnic, Menopause, Mental Health, Carers Network, Armed Forces and Apprentice Network. The network groups contribute actively to the development of a more inclusive culture by commenting on policy, leading on a broad range of ED&I campaigns working closely with Communications staff and contributing to positive staff engagement.

The Council has produced its Gender Pay Gap Report and continues to have one of the lowest Gender Pay Gaps within public sector organisations across the region. The Council's Gender Pay Gap report is now published on the Council's website alongside other documents that demonstrate the council's position in relation to ED&I.

6.14 Staff Survey Data

The Staff Survey was undertaken in October 2022; the first survey since 2019. Picker Institute were the provider of the survey in 2019 and following some challenges with the quality of the data analysis, it was decided to use an in-house system. This allowed us to have complete control of the information asked for and responses received. The system used is Citizen Space and during 2022 the HR/OD service ensured use of the tool met Data and Information Governance requirements. Communications were issued from September 2022 onwards with the emphasis on anonymisation of responses, as this had been raised with previous surveys. The Engagement team worked with service working groups to meet monthly to coordinate longer-range actions and to understand results of surveys including the Pulse surveys conducted through the COVID period. The staff survey had a **51.87%** response rate. Whilst this is a lower completion rate than in 2019, general feedback was that staff did not feel pressured to respond but did so of their own free will. Data was reported to the Executive Management team and the Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) and cascaded to all services through Working Groups Representatives and Heads of Service for their own specific data so that they could build their own action plans.

Timescales moving forward will be every 18 months to allow for actions arising from surveys to be undertaken by services and corporately. During the 18-month period, two short pulse surveys, 6 months apart, will be undertaken with focussed themes in order to get an understanding of workforce feelings, particularly regarding wellbeing.

6.14.1 Highlights of the survey - Areas of Significant Improvement

Qu	Description	2019	2022
Q74a	Often/always look forward to going to work	59%	71%
Q80b	I am able to make suggestions to improve the work of my team/department	75%	91.47%
Q80c	I am able to make improvements happen in my area of work	59%	81.22%
Q83a	Team members have a set of shared objectives.	74%	91.66%
Q84a	Satisfied with recognition for good work.	62%	84.74%
Q84b	Satisfied with support from immediate management.	78%	91.78%
Q108c	Immediate manager gives clear feedback on my work.	74%	93.69%
Q108f	Immediate manager takes a positive interest in my health and wellbeing.	78%	92.96%
Q110	Communication between senior management and staff is effective.	49%	77.74%
Q11b	Senior managers act on staff feedback.	41%	73.72%

In general, the responses showed the organisation scoring a lot higher than in pre COVID surveys.

6.14.2 Highlights of the survey - Areas of concern

Qu	Description	2019	2022
Q131	For those staff who have benefitted from these elements in their role I feel positive about the following aspects of Worksmart - Autonomy - Good use of office space - Not having to go back to my base/depot like I used to	53% 46% 50%	25.25% 17.48% 22.95%
Q63	What level of financial difficulty have you experienced due to the rise in the cost of living during the last 6 months?	79% No difficulty	15.76% No difficulty
	Have you experienced harassment , bullying or verbal abuse Yes – From Colleagues Yes – From Managers Yes – From Residents	Not asked Not asked Not asked	4.09% 3.71% 16.68%

Further work and action has been undertaken since the survey in regard to the concerning feedback on external abuse especially in frontline service.

6.15 Whistleblowing

The Whistleblowing Policy was reviewed, and the revised policy ratified and launched across the council in April 2022. This policy is now called, 'Raising Concerns at Work.' One of the main differences to the revised policy is that concerns raised by elected members will not be dealt with under this policy and any concerns involving the conduct of elected members should be referred to the Monitoring Officer.

Safecall still remains an important platform for staff to raise concerns at work however over the past year, the main method used for reporting these concerns are by letters or emails that have been sent to the Chief Executive.

Safecall is an external company which provides a helpline and promotional materials to support staff to raise concerns either anonymously or directly and staff or members of the public can contact Safecall via email or by telephone directly. The use of Safecall is advertised every week with the council's weekly communication bulletin. Safecall's advisors are trained individuals with many of them being ex-police officers. The total costs payable to Safecall during 2022/2023 were £6,252.00, for 4962 employees based on £1.05 per head.

6.15.1 Whistleblowing Data

During 2022/2023 there were 9 (down from 10 in the previous year) issues/allegations reported in line with the Council's Whistleblowing Policy.

Service	Referral format	Allegation / Issue	Open / Closed	Outcome
Public Health, Inequalities and Stronger Communities	Email	Bullying	Closed	Investigated through Disciplinary process
Adults, Ageing and Welling	Safecall	Bullying	Closed	No action required
Children, Young People and Education	Safecall	Bullying	Closed	Performance Management initiated
Adults, Ageing and Welling	Safecall	Inappropriate Behaviour	Closed	Investigated through Disciplinary process
Adults, Ageing and Welling	Safecall	Inappropriate Behaviour	Closed	No action required
Public Health, Inequalities and Stronger Communities	Email	Bullying	Closed	No action required
Place and Regeneration	Letter	Bullying	Closed	Training and management action
Place and Regeneration	Email	Theft	Closed	No action required
Adults, Ageing and Welling	Letter	Employment Practices / Behaviours	Closed	Informal management actions

The source of referrals were as follows:

Directorate	Number of referrals
Adults, Ageing and Welling	4

Public Health, Inequalities and Stronger Communities	2
Children, Young People and Education	1
Place and Regeneration	2
Total:	9

Format of referral:

Format	Number
Other (letters and emails)	5
Safecall	4
Total:	9

Nature of referral:

Nature of referral:	Number
Bullying	5
Employment Practices/Behaviours	1
Theft	1
Inappropriate Behaviour	2
Total:	9

Outcomes from referral:

Outcome	Number
Investigated through Disciplinary process	2
Informal Resolution	1
No action required	4
Performance Management	1
Training and Management Action	1
Total:	9

7. Performance, monitoring and Governance

7.1 Due to content duplication, data improvement and low participation levels, Workforce Committee was disbanded in January 2023. Compliance is now monitored and maintained as follows:

- Monthly highlight reports concerning all workforce activity to Executive Management team.
- Dynamic and timely access to improved management data empowers manager to monitor and identify patterns of activity and make interventions as appropriate.
- Overview data at organisational level is distributed to the senior management population to allow KPI monitoring and cross-council comparison. This data is discussed at directorate level and intervention is supported by the operational HR team.
- Best practice, corporate issues impacting the workforce and development activities feature instead on the agendas of the pre-existing, well-established monthly Corporate Briefing and Leadership and management sessions.

7.2 All HR policies are developed and reviewed in accordance with a schedule maintained and administered by HR/OD. HR policy development activity takes place in conjunction between HR/OD and recognised trade unions, senior managers and network groups before final ratification at JCC.

7.3 Policies are published and readily accessible on the HR sharepoint site accessible via the staff intranet 'The Beat'

8. Future Objectives and Opportunities for HR/OD

8.1 Strategy

During 2022/2023 actions from the workstreams of the 21/24 People Strategy continued to be delivered by HR/OD. However, there has been a significant recent period of change and it has therefore been identified that a revised strategy will be defined in 2023. This is due to:

- BEST and associated new ways of working
- A refreshed corporate plan
- A structured approach to service planning and corporate performance management
- Review of working arrangements and worksmart

Many aspects of the previous people strategy will carry forward to the revised people strategy.

8.2 HR Function and Structure

The HR/OD operating model will be examined to ensure optimised efficiency and to structurally align to the new people strategy and transformed ways of working brought about by BEST. To this end, a full-service review by the Strategic Change team within Transformation and Resources commenced in summer 2023.

The HR/OD team has flexed to support service need and organisational development throughout the last twelve months, and this has included individuals working in different roles and departments as needed. The leadership of the service changed when Leanne Furnell left NCC in October 2022. Existing members of the HR management team covered responsibilities until permanent appointment was made to the role of Director of Workforce and OD in February 2023.

With effect from November 2024, a new Head of Service role – ‘Head of OD’ has been created using transformation funding. Through this, it is anticipated that the service will better support the organisation with increased expertise and capacity in Learning and Development, Change Management, Leadership Development, Culture and will bring closer strategic alignment of OD activities.

Key partnerships, contracts and systems will be reviewed to ensure they are fit for purpose and delivering high quality whilst achieving value for money.

9. Conclusions of report

This report demonstrates the extensive range and scope of HR/OD activity during the period 2022/23.

Despite a period of significant change, HR/OD have maintained a consistently high level of service and in some areas demonstrable improvement in performance has been observed.

10. Recommendations

The recommendations are:

- Corporate Services and Economic Growth Overview & Scrutiny Committee note the contents of the report.
- Corporate Services and Economic Growth Overview & Scrutiny Committee continue to receive an annual update of this report for every financial year.
- Note the data that is contained in the whistleblowing report and the ongoing work to promote a safe environment for staff to raise concerns through various mechanisms across the Council.
- Support the continued use of Safecall across the Council as an additional mechanism for staff to raise whistleblowing concerns.

Implications arising from this report

Policy	All workforce actions need to be in line with government regulations and guidelines.
Finance and value for money	The workforce is of significant cost to the Council and therefore it is essential that the workforce performs efficiently to ensure that the Council achieves value for money in relation to service provision.
Legal	There are legal implications for the Council if employment practices are not in line with the law and best practice.
Procurement	None.
Human Resources	As included within the report.
Property	The <i>WorkSmart</i> project has implications for the use and functionality of the building's estate.
Equalities (Impact Assessment attached) Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	All HR policies and procedures are subject to an equality impact assessment.
Risk Assessment	Risks relating to the ongoing health and wellbeing of staff are managed locally and both Strategic and Operational Risk registers are in operation
Crime & Disorder	None.
Customer Consideration	Improved staff performance will impact on the quality of customer experience.
Carbon reduction	WorkSmart and home working has positive environmental impacts as does the introduction of specific training for Climate Change.
Wards	All.

Report sign off.

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

Role	Name
Finance Officer	Jan Willis
Monitoring Officer/Legal	Neil Masson obo Stephen Gerrard
Human Resources	Sarah Farrell
Executive Director	Helen Paterson
Portfolio Holder(s)	Cllr Richard Wearmouth

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Northumberland
County Council

Regeneration Update

Corporate Services & Economic Growth
Overview and Scrutiny Committee
25 September 2023

Broad Role

- Support the delivery of the Corporate Plan's three key priorities, by
- Making the case for external funding investment in the county that meets the economic growth and regeneration needs and opportunities of communities and businesses across the county; influencing regional policy, programmes and investment plans
- Managing the progressive development and implementation of the subsequent and extensive pipeline of secured regeneration, culture and growth projects and programmes
- Providing the Council's accountable body role for externally funded projects and programmes to manage performance and ensure compliance

Areas of investment & activity

- Town & community regeneration
- Cultural investment
- Rural stewardship and growth
- Economic growth
- Strategic sites

Town & Community Regeneration

- Energising Blyth Programme
 - Capital investment in 11 significant projects funded by Towns Fund and Future High Street Fund:
 - Phase 1 projects successfully underway
- Ashington Investment Plan
 - High Street Innovation Programme funded by North of Tyne Combined Authority and DLUHC Regeneration funding
- Borderlands Place Programme
 - Development of Town Investment Plans – Alnwick, Bedlington, Newbiggin, Bellingham, Haltwhistle,, Prudhoe, and Rothbury
- Hexham High Street Heritage Action Zone
 - Heritage-led regeneration initiative sponsored by Historic England

Town & Community Regeneration

- Maintain strategic relationship with Town and Parish Councils
- Community Chest
 - Annual call by Local Area Councils for community-based projects
- Community Assets
 - Right to Bid
 - Community Asset Transfer
- External Funding Advisory Service
 - Access to funding advice tools and information

Culture led-regeneration & investment

- 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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Hadrian's Wall Investment Programme

- Unlocking the economic potential of this iconic World Heritage Site
- Destination Tweed
 - Creating a new long-distance recreational route along the Tweed
- Independent Review of Cultural Investment Portfolio
- Culture and Creative Zone - Berwick

Rural Stewardship and Growth

- Rural Stewardship and Investment Plan
- Northumberland Small Business Service (NSBS)
 - Supporting small and micro businesses with growth potential and / or growth ambition to implement business growth plans in rural areas
 - Enterprise support offer for all eligible businesses / individuals in the County.
- Rural Asset Multiplier Pilot (RAMP) - Rural local-led regeneration programme, focused on maximising the assets in the National Park and the coastal AONB
- Integrated land management of the countryside
 - Great Northumberland Forest
 - Local Nature Recovery Strategies
- Rural & Environment Portfolio – transition to North East Combined Authority

Economic Growth

- Employment Partnerships with the voluntary and community sector to help those residents furthest from work back into employment
- Tailoring DWP and regional employability support programmes to the needs of Northumberland residents
- Inclusive Growth Community Partnership
- Work and Health Strategy
- Visitor Economy – Local Visitor Economy Partner (LVEP); Destination Development Partnership (DDP) national pilot
- Development of new North East Combined Authority to support Northumberland priorities
- Key partnerships – e.g. Energy Central

Strategic Sites

- Working with Advance Northumberland to attract businesses on to the county's Enterprise Zones
 - Northumberland Energy Park
 - Blyth Riverside
 - Ashwood Business Park, Ashington

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Working with the North of Tyne Combined Authority to unlock the economic potential of the Northumberland Line

- Defining the next sites for future employment and housing development
- Unlocking the cultural and tourism offer
- Strengthening the digital connectivity
- Build the skills base of the local workforce

Questions and Comments

Response to Corporate Services and Economic Growth Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 25th Sept 2023

At the Corporate Services and Economic Growth Overview and Scrutiny Committee held in June 2023 members sought an explanation as to why the £250,000 allocated to the Parks Enhancement Capital Programme had not been utilised in 2022/23 and an assurance that it would be spent this year.

Response:

The £250,000 refers to a Revenue Contribution to Capital Outlay (RCCO) component of the Parks Enhancement Capital Budget allocation. This contribution was not utilised in 22/23 but will be fully utilised in 2023/24. This funding was not utilised in 2022/23 due to the delivery of several schemes being delayed due to a combination of factors. These factors primarily involved: capacity constraints within the NCC Countryside Team, who were still having to undertake a large volume of Storm Arwen recovery works within parks and greenspaces; and delays whilst agreements were secured with partners over external funding contributions and 'in-kind' contributions, such as undertaking elements of the improvement works at no-cost – both of which act to maximise the overall benefits that can be secured from the Council's investment in the parks improvement programme.

It should be noted that during 22/23, £141,230 of the Parks Enhancement Capital Programme budget was utilised for the delivery of the following projects:

- Berwick – Castle Vale Park - renovation of ornamental pond
- Ashington – Hirst Park – supporting a partnership scheme with Ashington Town Council to provide new interpretation within the park to celebrate Ashington's sporting heroes which included a contribution from NCC towards the installation of the Jackie Charlton Statue
- Bamburgh – supporting a scheme with Bamburgh Parish Council with NCC contributing towards the construction of a new 'destination' play area
- Ashington – Wansbeck Riverside Country Park – revamp of children's play area
- Newbiggin – supporting a partnership scheme with Newbiggin Town Council with NCC contributing to the construction of new 'destination' play area at Milburn Park
- Isabella Park, Blyth – initial works as part of a large scale improvement scheme running into 2023/24 involving new interpretation and QEII commemoration information, path creation and improvement, tree planting, public seating and landscaping

In addition, a number of other Parks Enhancement Capital Programme projects and schemes continued to be developed during 22/23 which will be implemented across 23/24 and following years. The Countryside and Green Spaces Team has also secured additional staffing resource in respect of a Project Officer to support the development and delivery of projects and schemes

under the Parks Enhancement Capital Programme and the Queen Elizabeth II Commemoration allocation.

Good progress is being made with the implementation of the Parks Enhancement and QEII Commemoration schemes in 2023/24, with the following schemes having now been delivered or in progress:

- Eastwoods Park (Prudhoe) - perimeter path, community orchard (QEII commemoration)
- Valley Park (Cramlington) - path resurfacing, footbridge replacement, pond revival and platforms (QEII commemoration)
- Isabella Heap Country Park (Blyth) - path improvements, tree planting & landscaping
- Barns Park (Cramlington) - path improvements
- Queen's Garden (Tweedmouth) - tree planting, bench installation (QEII commemoration)
- QEII Country Park - access improvements (QEII commemoration)
- East Cramlington Local Nature Reserve - access improvements (QEII commemoration)

Northumberland County Council

Corporate Services and Economic Growth Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Work Programme and Monitoring Report 2023-2024

1. Terms of reference:

- (1) To maintain an overview of the Council's Annual Budget and Budgetary Management via the Medium Term Financial Plan.
- (2) To review the state of Northumberland and the County Council's activity in delivering its Corporate Plan.
- (3) To maintain an overview of the Council's performance management arrangements; highlighting areas of poor performance and monitoring recovery delivery plans.
- (4) To maintain an overview of the Management Agreements in place between the Council and Advance Northumberland.
- (5) To monitor, review and make recommendations about:
 - Corporate Services: Organisational Development, Health and Safety, ICT Strategy, Corporate Governance, Financial Services, Procurement Strategy, Risk Strategy, Shared and Traded Services
 - Partnership development coordination with local organisations
 - Relationships with external bodies
 - Regeneration and Economic Development
 - Strategic Transport Network and Infrastructure
 - Employability, Skills, and removing barriers to work
 - Capital Programme and Asset Management
 - Support to VCS organisations and the Council's relationship with town and parish councils.

To be Timetabled:

This will include the OSC being 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.

- Capital Programme (monitoring slippage)
- BEST (monitor progress within the Programme)

Northumberland County Council
Corporate Services and Economic Growth Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2023-2024

27 November 2023

BEST

To receive an update on progress with the programme and provide members with an opportunity to identify specific modules which the OSC may wish to examine in greater detail.

29 January 2024

Debt Recovery Update

To provide the Committee with information regarding the level of outstanding debt owed to the Council and to give assurance as to the efficiency and effectiveness of its collection and recovery policies and systems.

29 March 2024

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Northumberland County Council
Corporate Services and Economic Growth Overview and Scrutiny Committee Monitoring Report 2023-2024

Ref	Date	Report	Decision	Outcome
1.	26 June 2023	Presentations from Executive Directors on Forthcoming Issues (Jan Willis/Simon Neilson)	RESOLVED that the information was noted and the issues identified for further examination be included on the Committee's work programme.	The work programme will continue to develop in accordance with the Committee's priorities.
2.	26 June 2023	Financial Performance 2022/23: February 2023 (Provisional Outturn 2022/23)	RESOLVED that (a) the information be noted, and (b) a report be presented to the next meeting setting out the proposals for ensuring the delivery the Parks and Green Spaces Programme.	A report on the issues identified regarding Parks and Green Spaces be prepared for the next meeting.
3.	26 June 2023	Debt Recovery Update	RESOLVED that the report be noted.	The Committee will continue to receive six monthly updates.

FINANCIAL PERFORMACE 2022-23: POSITION AT THE END OF FEBRUARY 2022 (PROVISIONAL OUTTURN 2022-23)

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