



# Northumberland County Council

**Your ref:**

**Our ref:**

**Enquiries to:** Karon Hadfield

**Email:**

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**Tel direct:** 0345 600 6400

**Date:** Monday, 3 February 2025

Dear Sir or Madam,

Your attendance is requested at a meeting of the **CABINET** to be held in **COUNCIL CHAMBER - COUNTY HALL** on **TUESDAY, 11 FEBRUARY 2025** at **10.00 AM**.

Yours faithfully

Dr Helen Paterson  
Chief Executive

**To Cabinet members as follows:-**

**V Jones, G Renner-Thompson, J Riddle, G Sanderson (Chair), J Watson, R Wearmouth (Vice-Chair), C Horncastle, W Pattison, W Ploszaj and G Stewart**

Cabinet meetings are streamed live on the Council's Youtube channel, Northumberland TV at NorthumberlandTV – YouTube



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

## PART I

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

### 1. Apologies for Absence

### 2. Minutes

(Pages  
11 - 20)

Minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held on Tuesday 14 January 2025, as circulated, to be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

### 3. Disclosure of Members' Interests

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

- a. Which **directly relates to** Disclosable Pecuniary Interest ('DPI') as set out in Appendix B, Table 1 of the Code of Conduct, to disclose the interest, not participate in any discussion or vote and not to remain in room. Where members have a DPI or if the matter concerns an executive function and is being considered by a Cabinet Member with a DPI they must notify the Monitoring Officer and arrange for somebody else to deal with the matter.
- b. Which **directly relates to** the financial interest or well being of a Other Registrable Interest as set out in Appendix B, Table 2 of the Code of Conduct to disclose the interest and only speak on the matter if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting but otherwise must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain the room.
- c. Which **directly relates to** their financial interest or well-being (and is not DPI) or the financial well being of a relative or close associate, to declare the interest and members may only speak on the matter if members of the public are also allowed to speak. Otherwise, the member must not take part in discussion or vote on the matter and must leave the room.
- d. Which **affects** the financial well-being of the member, a relative or close associate or a body included under the Other Registrable Interests column in Table 2, to disclose the interest and apply the test set out at paragraph 9 of Appendix B before deciding whether they may remain in the meeting.
- e. Where Members have or a Cabinet Member has an Other Registerable Interest or Non Registerable Interest in a matter being considered in exercise of their executive function, they must notify the Monitoring Officer and arrange for somebody else to deal with it.

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

- 4. Budget 2025-26 and Medium Term Financial Plan 2025-2029** (Pages 21 - 230)
- Report of the Leader of the Council**
- The purpose of this report is to enable the Cabinet to make formal budget recommendations to the County Council.
- The report provides the Revenue Budget for 2025-26 and Revenue MTFP 2025-29 and the Capital Budget for 2025-26 and Capital MTFP 2025-29, following the Government's Autumn Statement on 30 October 2024, the Local Government Finance Policy Statement 2025-26 on the 28 November 2024, and the publication of the provisional Local Government Finance Settlement on 18 December 2024.
- It is important to note that there may need to be some revisions to the figures following receipt of the Government's final Local Government Finance Settlement figures in February 2025. It is proposed that any changes to the figures as a result of this announcement, which impact on the Budget 2025-26 and MTFP 2025-29 are delegated to the Executive Director of Transformation and Resources in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services. If the final Local Government Settlement is received prior to the Cabinet or 19 February 2025 Council meeting, then a supplementary report will be provided to Members advising of any changes.
- 5. Revenues and Benefits Policies 2025-26** (Pages 231 - 360)
- Report of the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services**
- The purpose of this report is to update Members on the policies governing the administration of Revenues and Benefits and seek approval for the updates and amendments highlighted.
- 6. Corporate Fraud Policies for 2025-26** (Pages 361 - 390)
- Report of the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services**
- The purpose of the report is to provide an update on the County Council's policies and seek approval for updated policies.
- 7. Summary of New Capital Proposals considered by Officer Capital Strategy Group** (Pages 391 - 408)
- Report of the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services**
- This report summarises proposed amendments to the Capital Programme considered by the Capital Strategy Group on 19 December 2024.
- 8. Energy Central Campus Phase 2: Energy Central Institute** (Pages

**Report of the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Supporting Business and Opportunities**

409 -  
422)

In accordance with the Energising Blyth Programme - Local Assurance Framework, the report seeks the endorsement of the Outline Business Case (OBC) for the Energy Central Campus Phase 2: Energy Central Institute.

Northumberland County Council (NCC) as Local Authority has a number of critical roles in relation to the Project:

- a) NCC is a founder member of ECC Ltd, is central to enabling project delivery acting as guarantor to the Grant Funding Agreements.
- b) NCC is the Accountable Body for the Town Deal Funding.
- c) NCC as freehold landowner of the development site.

**9. Northumberland Food Strategy**

(Pages  
423 -  
452)

**Report of the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Supporting Business and Opportunities and the Cabinet Member for Tackling Inequalities**

The purpose of this report is to agree the strategic objectives and high level delivery priorities to support the development of Northumberland's food system and agree early interventions.

**10. Care Quality Commission assessment of adult social care**

(Pages  
453 -  
464)

**Report of the Cabinet Member for Caring for Adults**

This report summarises the conclusions of the assessment of adult social care in Northumberland by the Care Quality Commission, following their visit in August 2024. Overall, the Council's adult social care services were rated as "Good".

**11. School Admission Arrangements**

(Pages  
465 -  
668)

**Report of the Cabinet Member for Inspiring Young People**

This report informs Cabinet of the outcomes of the consultation on:

- School Admission Arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools for the 2026/27 Academic Year as required by the School Admissions Code 2021. Approval (determination) of these admission arrangements is also sought.
- School Transport Policy for Children of Compulsory School Age, September 2024.

**12. Urgent Business**

To consider such other business as, in the opinion of the Chair, should, by

reason of special circumstances, be considered as a matter of urgency.

## **PART II**

It is expected that matters included in this part of the Agenda will be dealt with in private. Reports referred to are enclosed for members and officers only, coloured pink and marked "Not for Publication".

### **13. Exclusion of Press and Public**

The Committee is invited to consider passing the following resolution:

(a) That under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item on the Agenda as it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I of Schedule 12A of the 1972 Act, and

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

#### **Agenda Item – 14**

##### **Paragraph of Part I of Schedule 12A – 3**

Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding the information). The public interest in maintaining this exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosure because disclosure could adversely affect the business reputation or confidence in the person / organisation, and could adversely affect commercial revenue.

### **14. Summary of New Capital Proposals Considered by the Officer Capital Strategy Group**

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This confidential appendix relates to item 7 in Part 1 of the agenda above. Unless Cabinet are of the opinion when considering the matter under item 7, that they wish to exclude the press and public to allow discussion of the confidential issues, and they pass the appropriate resolution at that point, then the confidential appendix will be taken as read, and the debate will be in public so far as practicable.

(Pages  
669 -  
670)

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

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

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

## Registering Interests

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

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

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

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

### Non participation in case of disclosable pecuniary interest

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

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

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

### Disclosure of Other Registerable Interests

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

### Disclosure of Non-Registerable Interests

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

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

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

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



## Table 1: Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

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

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

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

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

## Table 2: Other Registrable Interests

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

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