



Northumberland County Council

Your ref:

Our ref:

Enquiries to: Nichola Turnbull

Email: nichola.turnbull@northumberland.gov.uk

Tel direct: 01670 622617

Date: Tuesday, 21 January 2025

Dear Sir or Madam,

Your attendance is requested at a meeting of the **COMMUNITIES AND PLACE OSC** to be held in **CONFERENCE ROOM 2 - COUNTY HALL** on **WEDNESDAY, 29 JANUARY 2025** at **2.00 PM**.

Yours faithfully

Dr Helen Paterson
Chief Executive

To Communities and Place OSC members as follows:-

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



Dr Helen Paterson, Chief Executive
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AGENDA

PART I

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

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. MINUTES

(Pages 9
- 26)

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

- a) 30 October 2024
- b) 27 November 2024

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
27 - 34)

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

OVERVIEW

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

5.1 BEST Review of Regulation and Enforcement Activities

(Pages
35 - 54)

To provide members with the outcome of the review and next steps.

5.2 Common Allocation Policy Review

(Pages
55 - 70)

To consult the Committee's on revised proposals regarding the Council's Housing Allocation Policy.

REPORT OF THE SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATOR

6. COMMUNITIES AND PLACE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MONITORING REPORT

(Pages
71 - 78)

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee operates within a work programme which is agreed at the start of the Council year. The programme is reviewed at each meeting so that it can be adjusted to reflect the wishes of the Committee and take account of any changes to the latest Forward Plan (which outlines decisions to be taken by the Cabinet). The Committee is asked to review and note its work programme for the 2023/24 council year.

7. URGENT BUSINESS

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

IF YOU HAVE AN INTEREST AT THIS MEETING, PLEASE:

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

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

Registering Interests

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

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

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

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

Non participation in case of disclosable pecuniary interest

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

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

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

Disclosure of Other Registerable Interests

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

Disclosure of Non-Registerable Interests

7. Where a matter arises at a meeting which **directly relates** to your financial interest or well-being (and is not a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest set out in **Table 1**) or a financial interest or well-being of a relative or close associate, you must disclose the interest. You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting. Otherwise you must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.

8. Where a matter arises at a meeting which **affects** –

- a. your own financial interest or well-being;
- b. a financial interest or well-being of a relative or close associate; or
- c. a financial interest or wellbeing of a body included under Other Registrable Interests as set out in **Table 2** you must disclose the interest. In order to determine whether you can remain in the meeting after disclosing your interest the following test should be applied

9. Where a matter (referred to in paragraph 8 above) **affects** the financial interest or well- being:

- a. to a greater extent than it affects the financial interests of the majority of inhabitants of the ward affected by the decision and;
- b. a reasonable member of the public knowing all the facts would believe that it would affect your view of the wider public interest

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

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

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

Table 1: Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

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

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

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

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

Table 2: Other Registrable Interests

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

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

Agenda Item 2

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

COMMUNITIES AND PLACE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

At a meeting of the **Communities and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee** held at County Hall, Morpeth on Wednesday, 30 October 2024 at 2.00 p.m.

PRESENT

Councillor N. Oliver
(Chair, in the Chair)

MEMBERS

Carr, D.	Lang, J.
Castle, G.	Mather, M.
Dale, A.	Morphet, N.
Gallacher, B.	Reid, J.

OTHER COUNCILLORS

J. Watson	Promoting Healthy Lives
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OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

H. Bowers	Democratic Services Officer
K. Lounton	Head of Community Services
S. Nicholson	Scrutiny Co-Ordinator
G.O' Neill	Executive Director of Public Health, Inequalities & Stronger Communities

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE

P Metcalfe	Contract Manager, Places People for Leisure
S Warriner	Area Manager, Places for People Leisure

1 member of the press.

18. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Cartie and N Walsh.

19. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Communities and Place OSC, held on 25 September 2024 as circulated, be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

20. FORWARD PLAN OF CABINET DECISIONS

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

A report on improving the condition of roads from Highways would be presented to the Committee on 27 November 2024.

A link would be shared with members on the Food and Feed, Safety and Standards Plan 2024/25, considered by Cabinet on 17 September 2024.

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

21. OVERVIEW

21.1 Places for People Leisure Introduction

Councillor Jeff Watson, Portfolio Holder for Promoting Healthy Lives was delighted to introduce the first report of the new leisure providers – Places for People Leisure. He stated that since the new providers had taken over there had been some negative comments regarding the consultation and redundancies. Councillor Watson reported that the consultation had created new opportunities. There had been 11 redundancies, of which only 1 was compulsory. The report showed an increase of usage in the centres in the first 6 months.

Steve Warriner, Area Manager and Paul Metcalfe, Contract Manager were in attendance.

A presentation was shared which explained what the organisation was committed to:

- Places Leisure was a social enterprise offering health and wellbeing facilities across the UK.
- Founded in 1991 operating under a not-for-profit organisation and any profit was reinvested.
- Working with 36 local authority partners, and managing just over 103 leisure facilities.
- The turnover for 2022/23 had been £849.6m which generated a total social value of £272m.

- Operating an Active Communities Outreach Programme with the objective of tackling inequality with a mission to create thriving communities in and outside of leisure centres. Community based activities within care homes.
- The six-month overview showed a phenomenal achievement over the first 6 months. With Places paying a Real Living Wage, all staff received between 5% and 7% pay increase on transfer. Staff benefits also included free family membership to facilities, a health cashback plan and discount voucher scheme. Staff recognition schemes included Manager Awards, Long Service Awards and Star Awards. Staff development opportunities included a free LinkedIn learning licence and Career Compass, which allowed staff to map out their aspirational career. Staff were able to communicate with senior managers through Colleague Voice representatives or a dedicated social media channel, Viva Engage.
- More people were employed across the country as an outcome of the contract.
- New roles had been made available across the county, due to the nature of the contract.
- The capital spend for Year 1 was £4,955.685 which included IT, energy reduction, marketing, Lynxight which used AI to send alerts to prevent water distress incidents. Soft play and clip and climb.
- The energy reduction investment included installation of LED lights and solar panels for Blyth, Ashington, Willowburn and replacement solar panels for Concordia.
- The invest to improve schemes covered gym refurbishments at Willowburn, Ashington, Prudhoe and Concordia, soft play/clip and climb at Ponteland and Concordia squash courts.
- The healthy communities programme had moved away from the traditional leisure contract to deliver exercise to the hard of reach communities to reduce health inequalities across the county. This included exercise referral which had added swimming and all group exercises. 500 people were actively participating in the programme as new members since using the ReferAll system and 56 had completed the programme.
- The GoodBoost programme for MSK issues had been implemented in Blyth and Wentworth with 37 active users.
- An NHS funded space for Cancer Rehab had been secured in partnership with the Cancer Prehab Service and See Sport Differently training in collaboration with British Blind Sport delivered across the county.
- All sites had the Big Sister Project running with weekly sessions, working on girls' confidence and activity.
- The NHS MSK team were delivering within centres utilising spaces and creating a natural referral pathway. Free family swims had been issued with 5 day passes to Concordia Leisure Centre for colleagues in Homes Plus to share with residents whilst their homes were being upgraded.
- Additional session of Mams on the Move.
- What's next, imminently:

- Staffing structure – a team was in place for November to expand services outside of centres.
- GoodBoost – expanding to Berwick and Concordia in November.
- Cardiac Rehab – sessions being added to Ponteland where there was currently no provision.
- Expanding wellbeing walks – current walks mapped to identify where expansion could be targeted to ensure wider cover.
- Developing Mams on the Move – creating more opportunities for mams to be active outside.
- Family Hubs – working with family hubs to understand barriers to activity.
- What's next, 2025:
 - GoodBoost to all wet centres
 - Escape Pain in collaboration with NHS MSK.
 - Move through Menopause Courses to be delivered across the county.
 - Cardiac Rehab.
- Membership information – membership had increased at end of September to 32,246. The numbers had increased since April by 3.87%.
- Usage - Morpeth Leisure Centre had the highest usage followed by Concordia and Ashington.
- Growth – Q1 to Q2. Q2 usage was lower but this was during the summer holidays. It was hoped to report a comparative figure this time next year.
- Workforce management – the previous operator was a stand-alone trust and had roles that were duplicated within the Places Leisure structure. The contract required the addition of roles to meet contractual obligations especially within communities and undertaking maintenance on buildings.
- Investment in the Proud to Serve Costa Model that would provide full allergen control and consistent product offer.
- Consultation with colleagues to align to Places Leisure model was complete and new roles had been created.
- £25m of Social Value per year and 56% delivered within the first 6 months. A national formula could be shared to show how this was created.
- The Social Value Dashboard displayed the Social Value KPIs based on total social value generated; total number of Social Value participants; Social Value per person and Social Value per site.
- Service Planning:
 - Currently working with NCC colleagues to agree dashboard of KPIs
 - KPIs provide intelligence and insights into Year 1 Operation for baseline information.
 - Intelligence would also drive capital expenditure from Year 2 and beyond.
 - Draft Service Plan to OSC for review and comment.

Members were informed that the new contract had given the opportunity was to take a deep dive and in turn shape the contract to meet the needs of residents and staff and promote the corporate agenda for NCC in tackling inequalities.

NCC had tackling inequalities at is core and was innovative moving away from a traditional centre. Six tenders had been received as the market had been competitive because of wider social opportunities.

As the specification of the contract was different from traditional leisure specification this had attracted interest from other local authorities across the country about the Northumberland way of doing things. This was a public document and could be shared with members.

The following information was provided in response to questions and comments from Members:

- Any queries or complaints should be forwarded to Councillor Jeff Watson in the first instance.
- Activities and sessions were run so they could complement each other. Hexham used the pool for lane swimming and the swimming club, and Prudhoe was used for fun activities. Ponteland's facilities contained a splash pad and activities and traditional pool.
- It had been agreed that a report would be considered by the committee after the first 6 months of operation.
- Apprenticeships were approximately the same as before the Places contract.
- Newbiggin had received a significant amount of refurbishment, with the Community Hub opening last year.
- Most of the Health Community Teams had been appointed. Four co-ordinators were working on an action plan.
- Investment had taken place in new facilities in terms of securing members. A lot of work had been carried out around membership, retention and acquisition and membership numbers were reviewed daily.
- Recruitment was being carried out for Contract Health Community and Social Prescribing roles to bridge the gap between GPs. Once all the teams were in place, further information would be shared at a future meeting.
- The Active Communities Programme was a way of reaching out to those in hard to reach communities and targeted those who were inactive to become active.
- In some instances, hours had been reduced, particularly around catering. Where hours had been reduced, other ways had been introduced where hours employees could make up their hours, eg PT.
- Ashington usage had dropped because of some components of the spas not working and breaking down, but this had been across the county and usage was on the increase again.
- Lynxight was relatively new and provided additional detection which tracked swimming behaviours which would alert a lifeguard.

- There were no plans to introduce any more clip and climb facilities as they were not installed within 25 miles of each other as it created more competition between leisure sites.
- The Authority was satisfied with the restructure, transparency and openness of the consultation, which was a business operating model, moved to a more appropriate contract.
- A healthy food offer had been specified and the committee could consider the on-going Costa business model.
- There had been increased roles in front facing staff and job titles had been aligned to roles which would enhance the customer experience.
- There were ways which local leisure businesses could be supported to allow them to deliver their services
- KPIs were discussed at meetings, which were shaped throughout the year, eg tackling inequalities and outcomes. More people were employed across the country as an outcome of the contract. A more thorough deep dive could be brought to a future scrutiny meeting.

RESOLVED that the presentation be noted and note the presentation and its review to be included in the work programme for future meetings.

(Councillors Castle and Watson left the meeting at 3.33 pm).

22. Communities and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee Monitoring Report

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

The Scrutiny Co-ordinator reported that:

The Social Housing report which was due to be considered by the OSC in November would be included in a Housing Policy document which would now be presented to the Committee next year. The Chair requested that a report on Housing Allocation be requested for presentation to the January 2025 meeting.

The outcomes of the BEST Review of Regulation and Enforcement would be provided to the meeting on 29 January 2025

With regard to the Highways Maintenance Action Plan which would be considered by the OSC on 27 November 2024, the Vice-Chair sought assurance that it would include a response to overhanging trees and shrubs that were identified as a danger to road users during the OSC's earlier review. The Scrutiny Co-ordinator confirmed that he had raised this with officers and was advised that it would be included in the Trees and Woodland Strategy report but agreed to contact them again to ensure that the issue would be covered in the November presentation.

Members referred to an email they had received from Councillor Flux (Chair of the Scrutiny Chairs' Group) reflecting on how scrutiny was working since the 'refresh' conducted in partnership with the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny in 2022. Whilst they agreed that the move away from the mandatory pre-scrutiny of Cabinet reports had allowed the Committee space to set its own priorities through the work programme, members noted that in exceptional circumstances reports could be pre-scrutinised although the preference would be to be involved much earlier in the process of policy development so that they could influence issues at the drafting stages.

RESOLVED that

- (a) the work programme be noted and suggested changes be actioned by the Scrutiny Co-ordinator, and
- (b) the comments regarding the scrutiny arrangements be noted.

CHAIR _____

DATE _____

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NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

COMMUNITIES AND PLACE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

At a meeting of the **Communities and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee** held at County Hall, Morpeth on Wednesday, 27 November 2024 at 2.00 p.m.

PRESENT

Councillor N Oliver
(Chair, in the Chair)

MEMBERS

Cartie, E	Mather, M
Gallacher, B	Morphet, N
Lang, J	Reid, J

OTHER COUNCILLORS

C Horncastle	Looking After Our Environment
J Riddle	Improving Our Roads and Highways

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

P Jones	Director of Environment and Transport
R Murfin	Director of Housing and Planning
S Nicholson	Scrutiny Co-Ordinator
H Proudlock	Senior S106 Officer
N Turnbull	Democratic Services Officer
K Westerby	Highways Delivery Manager

1 member of the press.

23. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Carr and Dale.

24. FORWARD PLAN OF CABINET DECISIONS

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

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

25. SCRUTINY

25.1 Highway Drainage Maintenance Action Plan

The Director of Environment and Transport was in attendance to update the committee regarding the implementation of the Highway Drainage Maintenance Action Plan with the additional funding agreed by Cabinet. He also provided an overview of the recommendations regarding the BEST review and how they would be applied.

A copy of the report agreed by Cabinet on 8 October 2024 was enclosed with the agenda papers. It highlighted the impact on the highway drainage systems due to the exceptionally wet weather experienced over the 2023/24 winter period and set out the proposed approach to address the drainage issues in advance of the winter period 2024/25.

Cabinet had resolved to 'approve an intensive programme of ditch cleaning, channel sweeping and gully cleansing activity using external contractors over an 18-week period starting in late August and running into the winter to address the damage to highways drainage systems and to mitigate the risk of a further increase in highway flooding issues and drainage maintenance requests from occurring over the coming winter period. The cost of this activity would be £59,542 per week, totalling £1,070,856 for an 18-week period, to be funded from the Council's Severe Weather Reserve.'

Councillor Riddle, the Portfolio Holder for Improving Our Roads and Highways, thanked members of the Communities and Place OSC for the time they had spent considering the matter at a couple of meetings over the summer period given the level of concerns being raised by councillors as well as members of the public. It was extremely helpful that the additional funding had been agreed for him in his role as Portfolio Holder.

The Director of Environment and Transport and Highways Delivery Manager outlined:

- Progress to date on Improvement Actions.
- How gulleys were monitored, use of photographic evidence, change in method for cleansing operations, risk rating and review to be undertaken following recent heavy rainfall.
- New software had been built to accommodate the development of a National Underground Asset Register in 2025 which would inform partner organisations if the assets at a location were not as expected.
- Key findings from the Best Rapid Improvement Review of Highway Maintenance by Deloitte:
 - Lean service with few inspectors than comparable LAs.
 - Use of electric vehicles in rural areas with insufficient range or appropriate charging infrastructure at depots.

- Time spent away from core duties by Highways Inspectors – changes had been made to support their role.
- New storage / waste disposal arrangements to be implemented for the emptying of gulley vehicles to maximise use of the vehicle and reduce downtime travelling.
- Identification of an accountability gap between the Highways and Flooding teams. Discussions were to be held with landowners regarding more sensitive agricultural practices such as a change in ploughing direction.
- Identification of tactical opportunities to obtain immediate service efficiencies or improvements.
- Incorporation of highway trees within safety inspections. If they were located outside the highway, contact was to be made with property owner.
- Constraints around tree felling activity.
- Ash dieback survey. Trees were categorised from 1 (healthy tree) to 4 (advanced dieback), defoliation categories from less than 25% (1) to more than 75% (4). Sample surveys had been undertaken on the A68 at Elishaw and A189 Three Horse Shoes. The survey work was being used to develop the approach to dealing with ash dieback which would be included within the work being undertaken to update the Tree Management Policy and the Tree and Woodland Strategy due in 2025.

He acknowledged that the scale of ash die back was significant with an estimated 183,000 trees on the highway or NCC land. Officers envisaged that an on-going multi-year programme of risk-based inspection and tree removal activity would be required at significant cost. However, it was noted that most trees damaged during recent storms were coniferous trees with shallow root systems.

The Chair reminded members that they would not be able to discuss ward specific issues, and that the discussion should relate to general principles and the approach.

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

- Felling of trees with ash die back would have an impact on the landscape.
- Although ash trees were self-seeding, it was likely that the plans would incorporate replanting.
- Ecological advice would be obtained regarding the felling of diseased trees. Leaving diseased trees in situ where possible from a health and safety perspective was desirable as it retained habitat, reduced visual impact and allowing self-seeding would enable the species to build resistance.
- An assessment would be carried out at each location as to whether it would be more effective to remove all ash trees in different categories or only selected trees in category 4. It was likely that both approaches would be trialed and assessed after a set period to determine future activity.
- Detailed information was held about floodplains, potential river flooding as well as surface water flooding. The LiDAR software system showed land

contours and could demonstrate the effect of different levels of rainfall. It was very challenging to direct water in urban areas due to slower absorption and the capacity of the drainage systems. Given the increasing frequency of weather events, the Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management (FCERM) team were studying the systems and had already started a joint study with the Environment Agency and Northumbria Water to look at drainage systems in Blyth prior to the recent surface water flooding incident. The results would inform investment by the Council, Northumbria Water and the Environment Agency. Local knowledge would be useful if there were anomalies. The work undertaken in Morpeth since the flood in 2008 was a good example of what could be achieved and build resilience to surface water flooding.

- Advance warning of heavy rainfall was essential so that gulleys rated as high risk could be checked. As there were 1,400 of these, this could not be done with very few hours' notice. Unfortunately, there had been no notice when the flooding had occurred in Blyth on 8 October 2024.
- Northumbria Water Limited (NWL) were in the process of installing sensors in sensitive areas of their sewerage system which gave them capacity to divert water from areas at high risk of surface water flooding. Officers were working with NWL to better understand the network and to support their installation of the new equipment to ensure they were able to react to issues and events with a computer controlled 'smart' sewerage system. This would also have the added benefit of reducing pollution issues associated with flooding.
- NCC held data on the most frequently reported gullies in the county, such as Denwick Lane in Alnwick. This allowed work to be prioritised and enable the capital budget to be spent more effectively.
- The report to Cabinet on the drainage action plan had been delayed. The extra work had commenced 3 or 4 weeks previously. Approximately £120,000 had been spent to date with a current weekly spend of circa £20,000. It was estimated that the funding would cover the additional work for another 20-30 weeks but that the programme of work would be accelerated in January.
- There had been a single BEST review of highways which had covered administration, customer services, inspections and operational teams.
- A copy of the BEST review would be circulated to members.
- The accountability gap between highways was being addressed by the Highways Delivery Area Manager and the FCERM Manager by looking at the key issues in the network that have caused concern and how they were best addressed. The FCERM Manager was already in contact with the EA regarding agricultural sensitive practices and how best different areas of existing activity could be utilised.
- The legalities had been addressed and documentation prepared to enable notice to be served on landowners under the Land Drainage Act 1991, where this was required. Unfortunately, it was acknowledged that this was a lengthy process. An example was given where the council had undertaken all of the work it was able to on drains within its ownership which had identified that there was a blockage on privately owned land.

- The extra funds were being spent equally across the county. More ditching work would be undertaken in the North and Tynedale whereas more gulley cleansing would be carried out in the south east of the county.
- A change in legislation had meant that the waste material from the gulley machines was now classified as liquid hazardous waste. They were now looking to replicate the transfer station at Blyth at other depots to reduce the time spent travelling by the gulley vehicles for the disposal of their contents. Disposing out of hours would require additional manpower and incur overtime rates.
- Fleet management had become more challenging given the long lead in time required for some of the specialist heavy goods vehicles. Some vehicles were replaced on shorter cycle due to the cost of maintenance and repairs being greater than the cost of replacement.
- Demonstration vehicles were trialed by the staff that would ultimately be using them, before orders were placed for new vehicles. Induction training was provided to staff when new vehicles were delivered to ensure that they knew how to operate them. Similar arrangements were provided to fleet maintenance staff by the vehicle manufacturers such as Dennis Eagle on any modifications or specific pieces of additional equipment which had separate maintenance regimes in addition to the normal chassis and engine maintenance. In addition to the normal HGV training, the gulley tanker operators were now also required to undertake a 2-day sewer cleansing high pressure water course due to the additional PSI capacity of the equipment on board to clear more blockages.
- There had been significant investment in new plant and equipment. Unfortunately, the maintenance on some of the older vehicles had meant that it would not have been beneficial to keep them all, but they had kept the best of the older vehicles as a spare.
- Retention of staff with HGV licenses was difficult when better rates of pay could be earned elsewhere.
- The only practical solution to address the gulley cleansing problem quickly had been to bring in external contractors on an intensive programme.
- There remained £4 million in the severe weather fund.
- Feedback was provided by and to Highways Inspectors.
- The specification of the new gulley tankers had been challenged to make sure it was correct.
- As part of the most recent senior management review, the Highways Development Management team had been moved from planning to highways. The Infrastructure Manager was now responsible for HDM and FCERM teams who were 2 separate statutory consultees for planning applications. It was hoped that this would improve coordination and discussion of local issues with area managers and maintenance engineers. There would be a time lag between planning applications considered a few years previously and issues arising from new developments.
- The Highways Delivery Manager agreed to contact his NFU contact regarding the landowner documentation.
- All planning applications which would have drainage implications would consult highways, the EA, LLFA, NWL and whoever else was appropriate.

- Hedge trimming was largely the responsibility of landowners, and they determined the amount of vegetation removed. It was noted that landowners were also restricted on how frequently they could trim hedges (ie due to nesting birds).
- There was a duty to consult the public and particularly those that would be directly affected in the locality regarding the removal of a street tree. The duty to consult rested with the body that proposed removal. The duty had only recently become a requirement in the previous year and had been undertaken by the Council once with regard to the proposed active travel scheme in Bedlington. The duty to consult had not been required for the Corbridge to Hexham active travel route, as trees impacted by the latter scheme were not 'street trees'.

Committee members thanked the officers for the comprehensive report, update and additional funding which was making a significant difference in some areas with problems that arisen following the previous winter. They also:

- Expressed concerned that the team that dealt with trees was already overstretched and would require significant resource to address the issue of ash die back.
- Suggested that if notice was being given to residents in an area to remove vehicles to allow gully cleansing, it would also be beneficial to have other teams in the areas at the same time e.g. for weed removal.
- Recommended that more competitive salaries needed to be paid to retain specialist or highly trained staff. A new pay policy should be considered by a working group.
- Suggested that the landowner documentation needed to be more widely circulated to the National Farmers' Union (NFU), Country Land and Business Association (CLA) and national parks who would be able to disseminate it further. Landowners would not seek this information out on the council's website. All landowners should be provided with a copy whether by email or hard copy.
- Highlighted the importance that all parties understood the magnitude of the impending tree issue. There were an estimated 183,000 trees that the Council would be responsible for with felling costs of ~£600 each. All options should be explored, and the impact of different solutions assessed over a number of years, such as targeting only the worst trees, cutting down all trees in an area, leaving felled trees in situ or removal if there was a potential income stream from the timber. Councillor Dodd be thanked for highlighting the issue and that he be sent a copy of the presentation.

The Director of Environment and Transport agreed to action wider communication of the landowner document.

RESOLVED that the Communities and Place OSC:

- a) Thanked the administration for the additional funds that had been provided for the highway's drainage programme of work in 2024/25.

Ch.'s Initials.....

Communities and Place OSC, 27 November 2024

- b) Acknowledged the work that had been undertaken by officers since the meetings in June and July on the Highways issues.
- c) Receive an update on the position with regard to the emptying of the gully wagons in due course.
- d) Inform Cabinet that they supported the budget request in 2025/26 for more resource for preventative maintenance.
- e) Receive the update on the work undertaken on trees to date and that a further report be received in due course.

26. OVERVIEW

26.1 S106 Infrastructure Funding Statement 2023-2024

The Committee received the fifth Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS) which was required to be published by all Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) which entered into Section 106 planning obligations. (A copy of the report is enclosed with the signed minutes.)

Councillor Horncastle, Portfolio Holder for Looking After Our Environment, reported that the statement had to be published annually. It provided a summary of all financial and non-financial developer contributions, within Northumberland, for the financial year 2023-24. He commented on the time lag between monies being received and utilised for schemes such as affordable housing which required consultation and planning processes etc. There was also a difference in the amount of funds generated between the local committee areas which had advantages and disadvantages.

Rob Murfin, Director of Housing and Planning introduced Heather Proudlock, Senior S106 Officer, who had been instrumental in the more structured approach to ensuring that payments were received from developers and paid out for the various projects the money funded.

The statement intended to explain the process for members of the public without prior knowledge for nearby schemes. The approach had been upheld by central government as an example of best practice and included a breakdown on the Section 106 funds collected for each of the five Local Area Committees as well as a map which showed the location of where there were S106 agreements and the spend by each LAC.

He acknowledged that there was a delay in the system and highlighted the difference between the number of houses granted planning permission and the number not completed, or also perhaps not even started. The Local Government Association (LGA) had lobbied government for powers to compel developers to complete sites as often payment of S106 monies for affordable housing was tied to trigger points relating to the percentage of market housing completions. He confirmed that officers were in constant dialogue with developers to secure the delivery of S106 funding.

It was noted that the expected non-discretionary tariff-based system, a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) had not yet been implemented. Officers were awaiting publication of new National Planning Policy Framework within the next month which would embed new housing targets. Members would be kept informed regarding changes to planning legislation with further changes also expected later in 2025.

Heather Proudlock, Senior S106 Officer was in attendance at the meeting to improve communication with members and obtain feedback if additional information was desired.

It was noted that a typographical error on page 73 of the papers needed to be amended and should read 'South Tynedale' not 'South Tyneside'.

Members thanked the officers for the report and the work to improve the timely collection and spend of S106 monies. The following information was provided in answer to questions from members:

- The majority of S106 funds was earmarked for specific projects however, applications could be made for unallocated funds, such as sport and play. The process where a contribution had been made for offsite affordable housing was more complex and required the development of a scheme, planning permission and a developer in place to build. It was agreed that a link to information on the Council's website be circulated to county councillors to enable them to highlight the information to organisations within their wards, particularly if funds were generated by schemes considered by the Strategic Planning Committee and therefore local members who did not sit on the committee might not have knowledge of the scheme.
- If agreement could not be reached between a developer and the planning officer regarding the affordability of a scheme, the applicant would be requested to submit a viability assessment which would be independently considered by an external valuer determine whether the issue of affordability was legitimate or not.
- The Northumberland Consolidated Planning Policy Framework referred to the totality of all local plan policies and national policies which were available online. Policies were fluid. Reference was made to the Northumberland housing target which had changed three times between the date of submission of the Northumberland Local Plan for Examination in Public and date of adoption.
- Planning reports included reference to relevant policies and legislation. An application was determined in relation to the policies in force on the date of the planning committee and not the date the application was made. These could change over the course of a planning application was processed.
- The statement related to the 2023-24 financial year and did not include reference to projects such as playzones agreed after 1 April 2024.
- Clarification would be sought after the meeting and circulated to members regarding interested earned on S106 monies and whether that increased the S106 pot or was utilised elsewhere by the Council. It was noted that

rising construction costs could devalue the money that was obtained for a particular purpose and an argument made therefore the interest should be retained. The issue was also relevant if the money had to be repaid. Others considered that income and interest generated should be spent where it was needed, such as the highways drainage work discussed earlier in the meeting.

- It was confirmed that interest at RPI was charged on more recent S106 agreements. Therefore, if an agreement was signed in 2020 and the trigger point not reached until 2026, interest would be charged for the intervening period which would help offset rising construction costs. It was noted that this was similar to the governments levelling up policy.
- It was suggested that it might be beneficial if training was provided regarding pledges for projects, such as play parks or paths, to ensure that appropriate conditions were applied to ensure that schemes were delivered in a timely manner. These were closely monitored by the S106 team to ensure that money was utilised and did not have to be repaid to developers. Any at medium or high risk of failing be delivered within the specified timescale were reported to the Director.
- The Local Plan set out at a strategic level what infrastructure could be required in an area where development was proposed, such as new schools. This had been tested during the public examination of the local plan and was set at a level where 85% of all schemes should be able to pay the generic infrastructure requirement. Ultimately, this could be challenged by developers and a viability assessment for each scheme following consultation with relevant departments such as education to assess the actual need in an area. A list was collated with a case-based argument regarding the viability to pay the contribution. Detailed evidence and costings would be requested on an open book basis which would be independently assessed, as discussed earlier.
- The planning case officer consulted other departments to obtain up to date information and manage negotiations with a developer to obtain changes to make a scheme acceptable.
- S106 agreements normally only applied to 10 or more residential units and did not apply to every application. S106 agreements could not be negotiated on smaller sites and therefore contributed to the smaller figures in the southwest. This was one of the arguments for a metre² tariff-based approach. Generally the larger development sites were located in the southeast of the county.
- In some circumstances, if the impact of a scheme could not be mitigated, or a developer could not afford to make the required contributions, could constitute a reason for refusal of the application.
- Information would be circulated on indexation and interest.

It was confirmed that more detailed information was held by officers if members had queries regarding schemes and trigger points. This detail could not be included within the statement.

RESOLVED that:

- a) The report and S106 Infrastructure Funding Statement for 2023-2024, be noted.
- b) A link to the Council's webpage regarding Sport & Play be circulated to members of the Communities & Place OSC following the meeting.

27. Communities and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee Monitoring Report

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

The Scrutiny Co-ordinator reported that:

- Confirmation had been received that the Council's Housing Allocation Policy would be considered at the next meeting on 29 January 2025.
- The BEST review of Regulation and Enforcement Activity report provided a follow up on the planning enforcement matters considered by the committee earlier in the year.

RESOLVED that the work programme be noted.

CHAIR _____

DATE _____

Agenda Item 4

DECISIONS TAKEN BY CABINET SINCE LAST OSC MEETING AND FORTHCOMING CABINET DECISIONS - NOVEMBER 2024 TO MARCH 2025

DECISION	CABINET DATE/DECISION
Cabinet Papers - 10 December 2024	https://northumberland.moderngov.co.uk/ie/ListDocuments.aspx?CId=140&MId=2898
Q1 & Q2 Corporate Performance Report	RESOLVED that Cabinet note the progress against the Corporate Plan Priorities as summarised in the report.
Housing Policy – Towards a New Countywide Housing Strategy	RESOLVED that:- a. Cabinet note and agree the issues set out in the report to inform a new “Countywide Northumberland Housing Strategy”; and b. Cabinet agree that the issues in the report will inform; • the Northumberland Local Plan review • Housing Revenue Account (HRA) 30-year budget setting process • NCC Social Housing Regulation Assurance Framework • The Council’s work with partners to tackle inequalities.
Budget 2025-26 and Medium-Term Financial Plan 2025-2029	RESOLVED that:- (a) Cabinet review and note the revisions to the assumptions (and the risks) within the Budget 2025-26 and Medium-Term Financial Plan; (b) Cabinet note that further work is required to refine and finalise the Budget 2025-26 and Medium-Term Financial Plan; (c) Cabinet note that the revenue implications of the capital programme are still to be updated; and (d) Cabinet note that there are still budget balancing measures required to be identified over the term of the Medium-Term Financial Plan.
Council Tax Base 2025-26	RESOLVED that Cabinet approve the council tax base for 2025-26 as detailed within Appendix A equating to 116,999.73 Band D equivalent dwellings. This is an increase of 4,814.27 Band D equivalents from 2024-25 .
Financial Performance 2024-25 - Position at the end of September 2024	RESOLVED that:- (a) the following be approved: (i) the re-profiling to the Capital Programme of £69.689 million from 2024-25 to 2025-26 to reflect estimated expenditure levels in the current financial year. (b) the following be noted: (i) the projected overspend on services of £5.996 million and the assumptions outlined in this report; (ii) the supplementary estimates at Appendix A and the required changes to the budgets; (iii) the delivery of the approved savings at Appendix B;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (iv) the use of the contingency shown at Appendix L; (v) the use of reserves shown at Appendix M; (vi) the virements requested by services within delegated limits as shown in Appendix N; and (vii) the details of capital project reprofiling shown at Appendix O.
<p>Summary of New Capital Proposals considered by Officer Capital Strategy Group</p> <p>Blyth Market Place Improvement Works</p> <p>Cramlington Regeneration Active Travel Corridors Phase One</p>	<p>RESOLVED that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Cabinet approve the spend of £0.583 million (£0.193 million in 2024-25 and £0.390 million in 2025-26) to enable the completion of the Market Place improvements as part of the transformation of Blyth Town Centre. This spend will be funded from the existing Energising Blyth Acquisitions and Delivery budget in the Capital Programme; and b. Cabinet approve the amendment to the Capital Programme to reallocate £0.193 million in 2024-25 and £0.390 million in 2025-26 from the Energising Blyth Acquisitions and Delivery project to the Blyth Market Place Improvement Works project. <p>RESOLVED that:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Cabinet approve the spend of £0.300 million in 2024-25 to deliver active travel walking routes and the resurfacing of existing active travel corridors. This spend will be funded from the existing Cramlington Regeneration budget in the Capital Programme; and b. Cabinet approve the amendment to the Capital Programme to reallocate £0.300 million from the Cramlington Regeneration project to the Cramlington Regeneration Active Travel Corridors Phase One project in 2024-25.
<p>Education, SEND & Skills Annual Report Academic Year 2023-24</p>	<p>RESOLVED that:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Cabinet consider the education achievements of our children, young people, and residents across Northumberland in 2023/24; the impact of the work undertaken to support the achievements and the priorities for 2024/25. Members noted the content and outcomes in the report and scrutinise through direct questioning at full council and FACS scrutiny, and also via direct contact with the Director; (b) Cabinet note the valuable support provided to all learners within: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Early Years Settings and Schools · Special Education Needs support and service · Virtual School · Learning and Skills Service

	<p>(c) School Organisation and Resources; and Cabinet note that the priorities, core functions and action areas for the Directorate are in line with the plans of the council and our statutory responsibilities going forward.</p>
Cabinet Papers - 14 January 2025	https://northumberland.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=140&MId=2899
Budget 2025-26 and Medium-Term Financial Plan 2025-29 Update	RESOLVED that the update be noted.
Budget 2025-26, Medium Term Financial Plan 2025-29 and 30 Year Business Plan for the Housing Revenue Account	<p>RESOLVED that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1 Cabinet approve the Housing Revenue Account 2025-26 budget as detailed within Appendix 1, which will reduce the balance on the HRA reserve from £24.379 million at 31 March 2025, to £16.030 million at 31 March 2026; and note the indicative budgets to 2028-29 which will reduce the balance of the HRA reserve to £12.178 million; 1.2 Cabinet note that from 1 April 2025, social housing rent will be increased by Consumer Price Index (CPI) plus 1.00% as per the previously agreed Rent Standard. The budget detailed in Appendix 1 assumes that rents will rise by CPI 1.70% plus 1.00% with recoverable service charges also rising by CPI plus 1.00% for the period 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026; 1.3 Cabinet approve the increase of 2.70% for housing rents from 1 April 2025 in line with the Government rent standard; 1.4 Cabinet approve the increase of 2.70% for housing service charges from 1 April 2025; 1.5. Cabinet approve the Non-Recurrent Growth Item of £1.000 million for additional resources to tackle the backlog in the turnaround of void properties (detailed in point 6.11); 1.6 Cabinet approve the Non-Recurrent Growth Item of £0.600 million for demolition costs of unused dwellings (detailed in point 6.11); 1.7 Cabinet approve the Non-Recurrent Growth Item of £0.400 million for additional consumable materials (detailed in point 6.11); 1.8 Cabinet approve the use of £0.400 million from the Rent Hardship Fund Reserve, to contribute to the additional non recurrent growth. (detailed in point 6.6); 1.9 Cabinet approve the use of £2.003 million from the HRA Reserve to fund non-recurrent growth and to contribute to the ongoing pressure within the budget and to ensure the HRA sets a balanced budget (detailed in point 6.13); 1.10 Cabinet approve the estimated pay inflationary increase for 2025-26 of 3.00% totalling £0.723 million, which includes the impact of increased national insurance contributions (detailed in point 6.9);

	<p>1.11 Cabinet approve the Non-Pay Inflation Schedule for 2025 - 26 totaling £0.298 million (detailed in point 6.9);</p> <p>1.12 Cabinet approve the Recurrent Growth as follows:</p> <p>a) Additional Stock Condition Survey budget of £0.098 million from 2025-26 to cover cyclical costs of carrying out surveys on current properties to inform future capital expenditure (detailed in point 6.10).</p> <p>b) Additional budget of £0.100 million for electrical testing to comply with The Regulator of Social Housing (detailed in point 6.10);</p> <p>1.13 Cabinet approve the expenditure plan relating to £36.347 million which has been set aside over the 4-year period 2025-26 to 2028-29 in the HRA Capital programme to invest in Affordable Housing. Details are set out in Appendix 1;</p> <p>1.14 Cabinet approve the expenditure plan relating to £48.200 million which has been set aside over the 4-year period 2025-26 to 2028-29 in the HRA Major Repairs Programme to invest in continued improvement to the HRA housing stock. Details are set out in Appendix 1; and</p> <p>1.15 Cabinet note the indicative 30-year Housing Revenue Account business plan as detailed within Appendix 1.</p>
<p>BEST Next Phase of Ways of Working Developments</p>	<p>RESOLVED that Cabinet note the proposals for the next stage of implementation and that the updated Strategic Business Case with associated delivery costs and revenue savings will be brought forward for Cabinet approval as part of the budget setting process in February 2025.</p>
<p>Blyth Relief Road</p>	<p>RESOLVED that Cabinet:-</p> <p>a) note progress to date on the Blyth Relief Road project;</p> <p>b) approve submission of the refreshed Outline Business Case to the Department for Transport for review and approval following approval of the Council budget in February 2025;</p> <p>c) delegate authority to the Executive Director for Place and Regeneration to authorise submission of the planning application to the Local Planning Authority on completion of the necessary documentation;</p> <p>d) approve £0.720m of capital expenditure to enable detailed design and development of the scheme and preparation of the planning application documentation to progress during 2024/25 to be funded from the virement of £0.720m of Local Transport Plan funds for schemes that were due to be delivered in 2024/25 but which are now being re-programmed for delivery in 2025/26;</p> <p>e) approve the proposed inclusion of a £5.006m match funding allocation within the Council's proposed MTFP, to be funded from Strategic Management Reserve for the period 2025/26 to 2027/28, which will be considered by the County Council when setting its overall budget in February 2025, and for £0.650m of this funding to be used to continue progressing the scheme to 'shovel-ready' status by the end of December 2025, to maintain</p>

	<p>the overall delivery programme for this strategically important project. This will bring the Council's total contribution to the project to £8.963 million, representing 15% of the estimated scheme cost; and</p> <p>f) approves the updating of the capital programme as set out in 10.9 Table 1.</p>
<p>Notification of the Estimated Collection Fund Balances 2024-25 – Council Tax and Business Rates</p>	<p>RESOLVED that:</p> <p>(a) Cabinet approve the declaration of a surplus on the Collection Fund for the year ending 31 March 2025 in relation to Council Tax of £2.497 million to be distributed to the Council and Northumbria Police and Crime Commissioner in accordance with Council Tax regulations; the Council's share being £2.305 million;</p> <p>(b) Cabinet note the overall estimated surplus on the Collection Fund for the year ending 31 March 2025 in relation to Business Rates of £7.958 million; the Council's share being £3.979 million;</p> <p>(c) Cabinet note the distribution of the estimated Collection Fund surplus for Council Tax to the Northumbria Police and Crime Commissioner of £0.193 million, and the distribution of the estimated Collection Fund surplus for Business Rates of £3.979 million to the Secretary of State; and</p> <p>(d) Cabinet note the inclusion of the Council's share of the estimated Collection Fund balances distributable in 2024-25 of £2.305 million surplus and £3.979 million surplus for Council Tax and Business Rates respectively, within the Council's budget 2025-26.</p>
<p>Corporate Risk Management</p>	<p>RESOLVED that:</p> <p>(a) Cabinet agree the contents of the report in accordance with its responsibility for ensuring effective risk management throughout the organisation; and</p> <p>(b) Cabinet note that the report will be presented to the next meeting of Audit Committee as a source of assurance in its role of monitoring the effective development and operation of risk management and risk-related issues across the County Council and as part of its ongoing evaluation of the framework of governance, risk management and control within Northumberland County Council's accounting group boundary.</p>
<p>Summary of New Capital Proposals considered by Officer Capital Strategy Group</p> <p>Cramlington Regeneration Programme Alexandra Park Activity Trail</p>	<p>RESOLVED that</p> <p>a) Cabinet approve the spend of £0.150 million in 2025-26 to deliver the Alexandra Park Activity Trail project. This spend will be funded from the existing</p>

	<p>Cramlington Regeneration project in the capital programme; and</p> <p>b) Cabinet approve the amendment to the capital programme to reallocate £0.150 million from the Cramlington Regeneration project to the Cramlington Regeneration Programme Alexandra Park Activity Trail project in 2025-26.</p>
<p>Setting the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) 2025-26</p>	<p>RESOLVED that:</p> <p>(a) Cabinet approve the proposals for the continuing implementation of the National Funding Formula for 2025/26 as agreed previously, in line with the recommendation of the Schools Forum meeting of 27 November 2024;</p> <p>(b) Cabinet approve the transfer of up to 1% funding from the Schools' Block to the High Needs Block, in line with recommendation of the Schools Forum meeting of 27 November 2024. Note any amount above 0.5% will require the approval of the Secretary of State for Education (SOS); and</p> <p>(c) Cabinet approve the delegation of the final formula values and transfer from the Schools' Block to the High Needs Block, to the Executive Director for Children, Young People and Education in consultation with Cabinet Member for Inspiring Young People in line with the principles previously agreed at Schools Forum on 27th November 2024, once the final budget allocations are released by the Department for Education in December 2024.</p>
<p>Conservation Area Character Appraisals for Alnmouth, Lesbury, Warkworth, Embleton, Seahouses and North Sunderland</p>	<p>RESOLVED that the contents of the Conservation Area Character Appraisals for Alnmouth, Lesbury, Warkworth, Embleton, Seahouses and North Sunderland be noted, and Cabinet endorse their use as an evidence base and guidance to help manage change in the Conservation Areas.</p>
<p>Northumberland Air Quality Strategy</p>	<p>RESOLVED that Cabinet approve the Northumberland Air Quality Strategy 2025-2030 and agree to it's publication.</p>
<p>Data and Insights to Start Well, Live Well and Age Well in Northumberland</p>	<p>RESOLVED that:-</p> <p>(a) Cabinet approve the use of the data on the JSNAA website where applicable to inform relevant policies, strategies and programmes across the Council; and</p> <p>(b) Cabinet agree the work plan for 2025-26 to further build our intelligence about Northumberland's health and wellbeing.</p>

CABINET FORWARD PLAN

<p>Northumberland Food Strategy</p> <p>To approve the Northumberland Food Strategy and set out the context of activity moving forward in line with Northumberland's Economic Strategy,</p>	<p>11 February 2025</p>
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Inequalities Plan, Climate Change Action Plan and the North East Environmental Stewardship, Coast and Rural Growth Investment Plan.	
Energy Central Campus Phase 2: Energy Central Institute	11 February 2025
This report updates Cabinet and seeks approval of the Outline Business Case and other key decisions regarding the development and delivery of the Energy Central Campus Phase 2: Energy Central Institute project.	
Budget 2025-26 and Medium Term Financial Plan 2025-2029	11 February 2025
The report presents the updated Budget 2025-26 and Medium Term Financial Plan 2025-2029 to Cabinet (for recommendation to County Council) following the receipt of the provisional local government settlement which is due to be announced in December 2024. The report will also include an update on the deliverability of savings.	
Revenues and Benefits Policies 2025/26	11 February 2025
A review of Revenues and Benefits policies for 2025-26	
Care Quality Commission Assessment of Adult Social Care	11 February 2025
Report on the conclusions of the assessment of adult social care in Northumberland by the Care Quality Commission's (CQC), following their visit in August 2024. (Cabinet date dependent on when final report is received.)	
Corporate Fraud Policies for 2025-26	11 February 2025
To seek approval for counter-fraud policies for 2025-26.	
Newcastle International Airport - Governance Arrangements	11 February 2025
The report will seek approval in respect of governance arrangements and related matters concerning the Council's role as shareholder in Newcastle International Airport Limited.	
Outcome of the Tender for James Calvert Spence College	11 February 2025
To give Cabinet an update on the outcomes of the tender process for the construction of a new school building for James Calvert Spence College and seek the delegated approved to award the construction contract.	
School Admission Arrangements	11 February 2025
To inform Cabinet of the outcomes of the consultation on School Admission Arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools and the home to schools transport policy. Approval (determination) of the admission arrangements and Home to School Transport Policy is also sought.	
Summary of New Capital Proposals considered by Officer Capital Strategy Group	11 February 2025
This report summarises proposed amendments to the Capital Programme considered by the Capital Strategy Group on 19 December 2024.	
Financial Performance 2024-25 – Position at End of December 2024	11 March 2025
Financial position as at December 2024 and an updated year end forecast for the council budget for 2024-25.	
Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2026-36	8 April 2025

<p>The Northumberland ROWIP is a statutory document setting out how the County Council will identify, prioritise and plan improvements across the PROW network for the next ten years. It sets out nine policies and associated actions that will form our strategy for the next ten years to be delivered through rolling three-year Delivery Plans.</p>	
<p>Richard Stannard House</p> <p>This report updates cabinet and seeks approval of the outline business case and other key decisions outlining the delivery of Richard Stannard House</p>	<p>8 April 2025</p>

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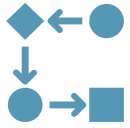
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The Northumberland Approach to Regulation and Enforcement



Agenda Item 5.1

Purpose of the briefing



The purpose of today's briefing is to present the Northumberland Regulation and Enforcement Model, the new approach that has been developed through a review of regulation and enforcement activities in the Council.



We will take you through:

- ✓ The reasons for change
- ✓ The objectives of the Review
- ✓ What the review explored
- ✓ Who was involved in the review
- ✓ What the review found
- ✓ The Northumberland Model
- ✓ Structural Changes to support the Model
- ✓ Implementation timeline

Introduction – why change?



Organisational Drivers:

- ✓ Inequalities Plan
- ✓ Council Strategic objectives
 - *Empowered and resilient communities*
 - *Working better, more efficiently*
 - *Residents have the building blocks of a good life*
 - *Thriving Places and Culture*
- ✓ Best Objectives
 - *Improving outcomes for our residents*
 - *Enhanced experience for customers and staff*
 - *Driving efficiencies across Best*
- ✓ Council's Ways of Working Principles

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Transforming the Council through Best, imperative to change as an organisation, our culture, our approach, how we work and how we deliver services



Review of Regulation and Enforcement commissioned through Best to identify new ways of working

Objectives of the review

- Regulation and Enforcement activities, aimed at keeping our communities safe and well, are carried out in several services across the Council.
- A review into those activities was carried out through the Best Value for Money Workstream, with the objectives of developing proposals for future ways of working that:

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- Ensures a ***consistent approach***
- ***Removes silo working*** and duplication
- Has ***clear accountability***
- ***Provides assurance*** that the Council is meeting its statutory obligations
- Delivers on the ***Council's commitment to Safer Communities***

And to explore:

- Creating potential opportunities to achieve ***multiple benefits from single interactions***
- ***Data led approaches*** that deliver proactive and preventative ways of working

What the review explored



What the Council's statutory obligations are



Regulatory and enforcement functions across the Council:

- *What they are, where they are carried out, by whom and why?*



How services and functions currently operate



How services and functions work with external partners and with each other



Budgets, finance and funding



Performance management data



What data and intelligence is collected and how it is used



Considered if the current operating approach meets the needs of the organisation



Different approaches in other organisations

Who was involved in the review



The review was led by Audrey Kingham as the SRO for Best Value for Money



Supported by a project group of Executive Directors, Directors, Heads of Service and Service Managers



Workshops were held with staff from services across the Council who are involved in Regulatory and Enforcement activities:

- Legal
- Highways and Transport
- Neighbourhood Services
- Northumberland Fire and Rescue
- Planning
- Education
- Adult Services
- Corporate Fraud
- Children Services
- Public Protection
- Housing
- Public Health
- Safe and Resilient Communities



Staff involvement and input informed the development of the Northumberland Model

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The Findings of the Regulation and Enforcement Review








Service Challenges

- There is a significant amount of regulation and enforcement activity being carried out across the Council with **many positive outcomes** and some preventative work. The staff demonstrated a **real commitment to providing good quality services**.
- However, **several challenges** to efficient and effective service delivery were **highlighted by staff** participating in the review.

Key Operational Challenge	Description
 <p>Ownership</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Services feel there is a lack of strategic direction, understanding or ownership of regulatory requirements, functions and activities, leaving services to determine priorities for their service rather than a corporate view of priorities.</i> • <i>Services working on the same issue but concentrating on their particular element, eg; Planning enforcement, highways, Community Safety, no ownership or accountability for resolving the issue corporately.</i> • <i>Services have significant knowledge and understanding of regulatory requirements and powers in their own service area but there is a lack of wider knowledge or understanding of the regulatory powers and abilities of services.</i>
 <p>Shared Data and Intelligence</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Services holding vast amount of information and intelligence but no sharing of data or intelligence to ensure action required is coordinated.</i> • <i>Multiple services involved in cases or issues for the same or similar reasons without reference to other services involved, disjointed working.</i>
 <p>Finance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Services do not have access to a shared funding pot that would enable direct action against people or businesses committing serial infringements</i>
 <p>Ways of working</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>It is felt that risk aversion to enforcement action in some service areas is high in the Legal Enforcement Team with limited enforcement action being taken.</i> • <i>Regulatory and enforcement functions, activity and action is disjointed and disaggregated, with limited coordination of activities.</i> • <i>It is felt that services work in silos with collaboration being down to particular Officers, rather than a structured approach</i>
 <p>Capacity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>There is a lack of capacity to undertake preventative work, particularly in Community Safety.</i> • <i>Enforcement action is not being taken in Place-Based services due to a lack of capacity.</i> • <i>There is an apparent lack of understanding of which service covers which regulatory area, services are receiving multiple erroneous referrals that takes a significant amount of time to redirect to the correct service.</i>

What the review found – key points

Key findings of the review identified that:

Theme	Key Finding
 Strategic Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a need for a more robust governance framework with strategic leadership at its core.
 Organisational Overview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reporting is at service level, strategic leaders do not have one Council view of compliance with statutory responsibilities or issue resolution, therefore, which limits compliance assurance.
 Operating Model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How we currently work is inconsistent, disparate and disjointed with limited collaborative working. There is a need for a more structured, coordinated operating model to eliminate duplication of effort, enforcement action and cost.
 Customer Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are not best service our customers, how we currently work can be confusing and complicated to navigate for residents, internal services and external partners, it can create inequality of service delivery and does not resolve challenging issues.
 Ways of working	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We need to change the way we work to make best use of the specialist knowledge, expertise, intelligence and data available within the Council, taking a ‘one Council’ approach.

Outcome of the review

The review presented us with the opportunity to develop a ***Northumberland Regulation and Enforcement Model*** that ***meets the needs of the Council***, delivers better outcomes for our ***residents*** and strengthens working relationships with our ***partners***.

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The Northumberland Model

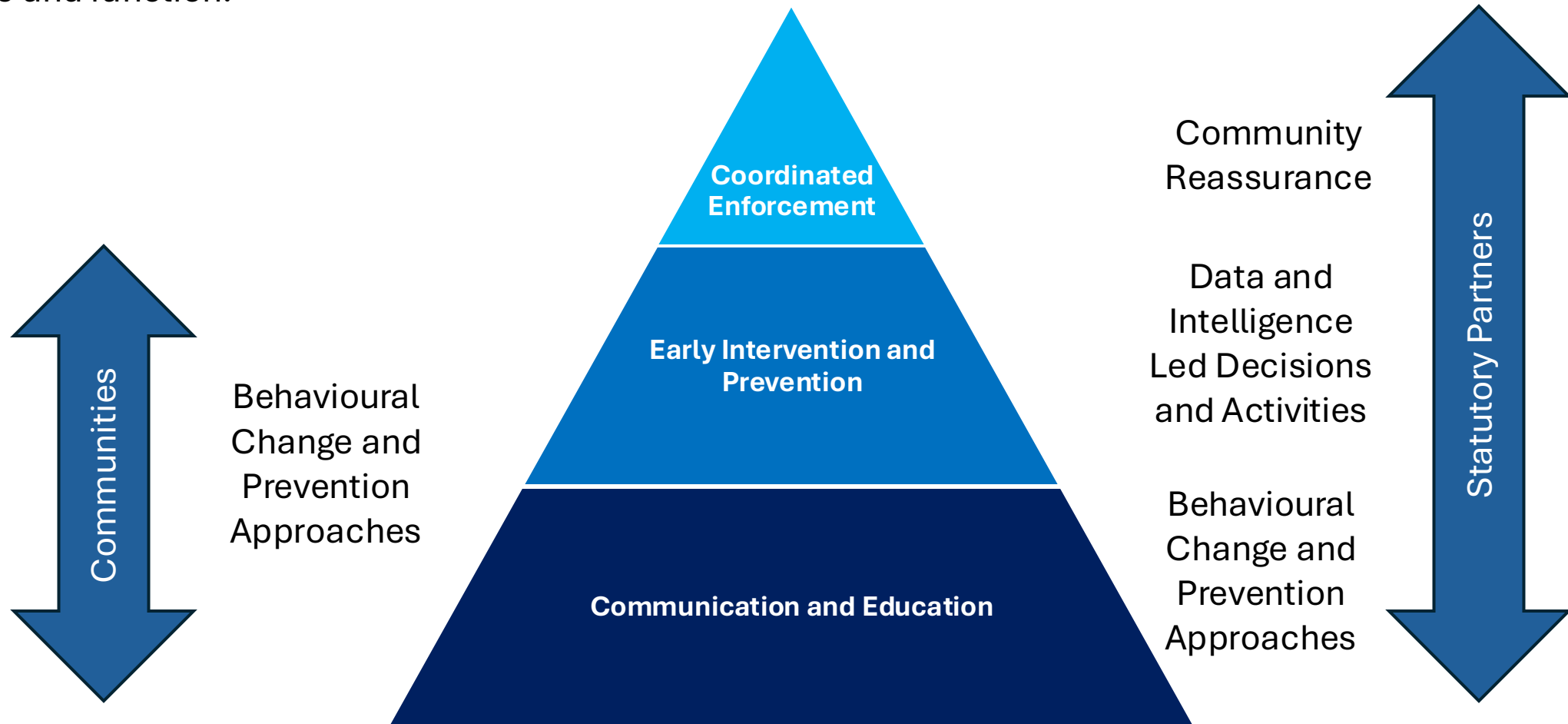
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The Northumberland Model

Development of the Northumberland model is predicated on the Council's **ambition to drive effective and efficient collaboration, coordination and communication** between regulation and enforcement functions and activities across the Council, applying the principles of the **Targeted Operating Model** aligning services by purpose and function.

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Governance Arrangements

- The model is supported by a **governance framework** to implement, manage and deliver the model, taking a three-tier approach: **Strategic**, for direction and assurance | **Tactical** for management and oversight | **Operational** for delivery.

Strategic Level

What we are going to do

Who:

- Executive Director Public Health, Inequalities and Stronger Communities
- Executive Director Place and Regeneration
- Director of Law and Corporate Governance

What:

- Agree strategic priorities and provide strategic direction
- Provide strategic leadership on Cultural change to *Communities First*
- Provide compliance assurance to EMT
- Meets quarterly

Tactical Level

How we are going to do it

Who:

- Executive Director Public Health, Inequalities and Stronger Communities
- Senior Manager representation from: Planning – Housing – NFRS – Legal – Neighbourhood Services – Highways and Transport – NCT – Public Health Protection – Education Welfare – Corporate Fraud – Revenues and Benefits

What:

- Develops the Council's Regulation and Enforcement Strategy and Corporate Enforcement Policy
- Develop and own the action plan to deliver the strategic priorities.
- Accountable for problem solving using issue specific task and finish groups
- Reports into Strategic Level

Operational Level

Who is going to do

Who:

- Led by Director of Stronger Communities
- Incorporates the current Corporate Enforcement Working Group with wider membership and revised terms of reference

What:

- Information and data sharing to inform activities
- Shared training, good practice and ensure consistent approaches
- Operational delivery of strategic priorities
- Provide resource for issue specific task and finish groups
- Reports into Tactical Level

Regulatory Excellence Framework Summary

- The Tactical Group will use the **Local Authority Regulatory Excellence Framework** as a tool to underpin the implementation of the model.

Overview

Themes <small>Page 48</small>	1. Leadership, strategies and collaboration	2. Focus on and engagement with customers	3. Resource, activity and people management	4. Achieving outcomes effectively and sustainably
Main Criteria	1.1 Service vision, direction and planning 1.2 Integration with local and national priorities and strategies 1.3 Collaboration with others	2.1 Engagement of customers and stakeholders 2.2 Understanding local needs and communities 2.3 Responsiveness to customers and stakeholders	3.1 Effective resource and partnership management 3.2 Activities are based on a sound understanding of risk and use of intelligence 3.3 Learning and supportive culture	4.1 Delivering sustainable outcomes 4.2 Performance management 4.3 Review and scrutiny for continuous improvement

Structural changes to support the Model

- The review and development of the model presented the opportunity to create better alignment of functions, streamline activities and remove duplication
- The governance framework, supported by the structural realignment, will provide greater capacity to address and resolve issues

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While there are some changes to roles, there are no redundancies as a result of the structural changes

- A full Communication Plan is in place to ensure information about the new approach to regulation and enforcement in Northumberland is shared widely as well as ensuring staff are kept fully informed of the implementation and timeline for the structural moves

Structural Moves

FUNCTION	CURRENT STRUCTURAL LOCATION	NEW STRUCTURAL LOCATION
Environmental Health Private Housing Standards	Public Protection	Housing Services
Building Control and Land Charges	Public Protection	Housing and Planning
Page 50 Environmental Enforcement Animal Welfare • Pest Control	Public Protection	Neighbourhood Services
• Community Safety • Safer Communities	Public Protection Housing Services	Safe and Resilient Communities
• Environmental Protection (incorporating Statutory Nuisance) • Trading Standards and Animal Health • Food Standards and Commercial Health & Safety • Licensing	Public Protection	Public Health, Stronger Communities and Inequalities

Anticipated benefits



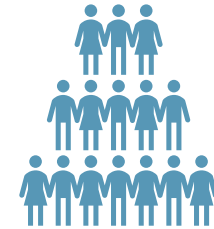
Staff

- **Developing and upskilling our staff** with new and existing capabilities
- **Improve efficiency and release capacity**, helping to maintain service delivery while reducing pressure on staff and partners.
- Greater consistency in policy application and fairness of approach, with clear strategic priorities and a coordinated approach to activity, should **benefit operational delivery, increase efficiency, improve staff morale and wellbeing.**



Council

- Exemplar for moving to the **new ways of working model** and in the practical application of the principles of the Inequalities Plan
- **Improved collation, recording, analysis and sharing of data and intelligence**, not only across the Council, but with our partners.
- Explore more **innovative and impactful enforcement action**



Residents

- Develop ways in which local communities can **influence priority setting**, be actively involved and engaged in making their community a 'Thriving Community'
- Clear lines of accountability and ownership of issues will result in **productive issue resolution, increasing public confidence** in the Council and its partners in dealing with regulatory issues.

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Implementation



Implementation timeline

Activity	January	February	March	April
Establish Implementation Group				
Finalise Implementation Plan				
Finalise Action Plans				
Develop and Implement Governance Structure level groups				
Develop the Regulation and Enforcement Strategy				
Socialise the regulatory excellence framework				
Engagement and communication with key stakeholders and wider council				
Go Live				

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Questions





Northumberland
County Council

Common Allocation Policy Review

29 January 2025

Susan Ogle

Head of Housing Services

www.northumberland.gov.uk

Common Allocation Policy (CAP)

The aims of Northumberland CAP are-

- Increase housing choice and meet housing need.
- Create a single point of access through a Common Housing Register to all social housing, including accredited private sector properties and low-cost home ownership options in Northumberland.
- Provide an open, fair and transparent housing allocations system that is easily understood, accessible and easy to use.
- Ensure consistency in the way each applicant access accommodation.
- Help prevent and tackle homelessness in Northumberland.
- Create sustainable communities.

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Common Allocation Policy (CAP)

- Introduced in 2002 and has not had a fundamental review – review is well overdue
- Main areas of concern and for discussion relates to the following
 - Assessment/Banding
 - Local Connection
 - Rural Allocations
 - Homelessness Applicants
 - Financial eligibility

Assessment

Applications are assessed based on their housing need which fall into a specific category. Banding categories detailed below.

Band P- Homeless Priority/Full housing duty, statutory duty to rehouse, demolition and regeneration cases (decants), Compulsory purchase order, high medical/welfare/hardship need, Supported housing move on, statutorily overcrowded, severe disrepair.

Band 1- Homeless not in priority need, medium medical/welfare need, severe overcrowded, insecure accommodation, under occupation, medium disrepair/lacking facilities, medium hardship.

Band 2- medical/welfare need, sharing facilities, overcrowded, hardship, keyworker, transfer applicant with preference.

Band 2R- No local connection, anyone on application owns a property, deliberately worsening.

Band 3- Adequately housed.

Bandings

Currently have 14247 applicants registered

- Band P - 349
- Band 1 - 1926
- Band 2 - 2674
- Band 2R - 837
- Band 3 – 8461

40% of all applicants have no assessed housing need

Bandings

- Propose to:
 - Delete band 3 – if an applicant does not have a housing need they will not be registered, this allows for more staff time to deal with vulnerable and complex applicants.

This would ensure that we would be dealing with those in housing need and currently this would **reduce the Housing Register to 5786 genuine applicants in some form of housing need.**

Local Connection

Currently those without a local connection are placed in either Band 2R or Band 3
Propose that if an applicant does not meet the following, they cannot be registered

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- Normally be resident in Northumberland. Local Government Association guidelines define this as having resided in the area for 6 of the last 12 months, or 3 out of the last 5 years, where residence has been out of choice.
 - Work in Northumberland. The Local Government Association guidelines define this as employment other than of a casual nature. For the purposes of this policy this will be defined as having had permanent work with a minimum of 16 hour contract per week for the previous 6 months, and without a break in employment for more than 3 months.
 - Family connections in Northumberland. The Local Government Association guidelines define this as the applicant, or a member of their household has parents, adult children or siblings who have been resident in Northumberland for at least 5 years. Only in exceptional circumstances would relatives other than those listed above be taken into consideration.
 - Special circumstances for moving to Northumberland. This could be special medical needs and the only/most appropriate treatment is available in Northumberland.

Local Connection

However, exceptions to this will include where:

- They have been accepted as statutorily homeless, and the requirement of a local connection has been waived for specific reasons
- Persons from outside of Northumberland fleeing domestic abuse and who are at the time of the application living in Northumberland, in a refuge or other similarly provided emergency accommodation
- People fleeing domestic abuse from another part of the country who would be at risk in the area where they have a local connection
- They need to move to Northumberland to give or receive support where failure to do so would cause hardship
- There are special circumstances such as health or support needs that are only available within Northumberland

Local Connection

- There are currently 1178 applicants registered with no local connection
- Majority are in Band 3
- 250 are in band 2R

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If we introduce no Local Connection Criteria this would mean that we would reduce the numbers on the Housing Register **5526 genuine applicants within Northumberland in Housing Need**

Rural Connection

Northumberland Homefinder recognises that there may be a lack of affordable homes in rural parishes and aims to support rural communities by awarding additional preference to families with a strong local connection. A rural allocations criterion may be used to let homes in rural parishes where the landlord, or a Section 106, indicates that this is appropriate.

Paragraph 64
A close connection to the parish or surrounding parish is defined as the applicant meeting one of the following criteria:

- Living in the parish continually for at least 3 years immediately prior to the date of selection for an offer;
- Be in continuous full or part-time employment within the parish;
- Lived continuously in the parish for at least 3 years immediately prior to being accepted as homeless but have been placed in temporary accommodation outside of the parish for up to 2 years;
- Having parents, adult children or siblings who have lived continually in the parish for at least 3 years immediately prior to the date of selection for an offer.

Rural Connection

- Currently no priority, if meet criteria then earliest registration date is successful
- Recently a young family living in a parish, the mother and father had lived there all their life bid on a property however property was allocated to an applicant whose Sister lived in the surrounding parish, both Band 1 but Sister had earlier registration date – Family may now need to move out of the parish
- Should we prioritise the criteria i.e. those currently living in the Parish have priority for those moving in to be near siblings for example?

Homeless Applicants

- Currently all Band P Homeless Clients are eligible to bid on relevant properties. This is encouraging applicants to be selective, raises unrealistic expectations in high demand areas & introduce inefficiencies in low demand areas. Applicants may be encouraged to wait longer for an ideal property as opposed to expressing interest on a property they have a high likelihood of being awarded. Results in lengthy stay in Temporary Accommodation
- 1 April – 31 December - £255,000 was spent on Temporary Accommodation for homeless applicants

Homeless Applicants

Proposal

To Direct let a property - Homeless Legislation allows for Local Authorities to directly offer a Homeless applicant a suitable offer of accommodation

One suitable offer would reduce waiting time, reduce TA Bill and reduces void times.

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The Localism Act also allows Local Authorities to fully discharge their full housing duty by a 'private rented sector offer'

We look to discharge our duty to the private rented sector as another option.

Financial Eligibility

Currently if an applicant has more than £100k in equity or savings they are not eligible to join the register, unless exceptional circumstances, i.e. Health/disability

Propose the following:

The capital, savings and equity available to a household will be assessed. If it is determined that a household can resolve their own housing need within their local housing market they **will not** be eligible to register. This assessment will be based upon:

- The household's capital, savings and equity
- The size and composition of the household
- The local housing market (prices to rent or buy).

The capital, savings and equity thresholds would need to be agreed.

- Next steps
- Questions
- Any further issues/concerns

Thank you

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Northumberland County Council

Communities and Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Work Programme 2024-2025

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Sean Nicholson: 01670 622605 – Sean.Nicholson@northumberland.gov.uk

Agenda Item 6

1. Terms of reference:

- (1) To maintain an overview of the Management Agreements in place between the County Council and Active Northumberland, Woodhorn Museum Charitable Trust and Northumberland Tourism.
- (2) To monitor, review and make recommendations about:
 - Development Planning
 - Neighbourhood Planning
 - Conservation
 - Housing
 - Climate Change
 - Countryside, Biodiversity and Landscape Quality
 - Waste Management and Energy Use
 - Public and Community Transport Network and Travel to School
 - Highway Maintenance, Streetscape and the Local Environment
 - Local and Neighbourhood services
 - Crime, Community Safety, and Fear of Crime, including CONTEST, Prevent and Channel
 - Antisocial Behaviour and Domestic Violence
 - Fire and Rescue
 - Emergency Services and Emergency Planning
 - Customer Services
 - Provision of Cultural and Leisure Facilities
 - Improving Quality of Life through Access to Culture and Leisure;
 - Supporting Economic Growth in the Arts, Culture and Leisure Sectors

2. Issues to be Timetabled/Considered

This will include work that the OSC can be more proactive in early stage development work in formulating new policies and strategies; to investigate matters of interest and concern to the wider community, and to keep under review the performance and financial position of the Council. Issues identified by the Committee for inclusion on the work programme are:

- North East Transport Plan

- Local Cycling Walking Infrastructure Plans – development of the programme
- Northumberland Road Safety Strategy – use of members scheme funds and costings.
- Northumberland Rights of Way Improvement Plan
- New Section 106 system
- Housing Policy Statement

Northumberland County Council
Communities and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2024-2025.

29 January 2025

BEST Review of Regulation and Enforcement Activities

To provide the OSC with the outcome of the review and next steps.

Housing Allocation

To consult the Committee on revised proposals regarding the Council's Housing Allocation Policy.

26 February 2025

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2 April 2025

Woodland and Tree Strategy

To consider progress in finalising the Strategy.

Local Nature Recovery Strategy

To provide an update on progress.

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

Ref	Date	Report	Decision	Outcome
1.	12 June 2024	Great Northumberland Forest Programme Update	RESOLVED that members noted the update.	No further action at this stage.
2.	12 June 2024	Highways Maintenance	RESOLVED that members received the presentation.	A further report will be presented to the next meeting.
3.	24 July 2024	Highways Maintenance Drainage Operations	<p>RESOLVED that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cabinet be asked to consider increasing the capacity for gully cleansing and road sweeping as outlined above and feedback on this recommendation be provided to the Committee in advance of the Administration setting the forthcoming budget. • A log be kept of landowner enforcement actions taken and be reported to this Committee. • The Leader be asked to contact all new MPs to ask them to honour the promised £184m over 10 years to highway maintenance and this be linked to RPI/CPI. • Information on how flooding incidents were reported and logged should be made available to the Committee. • Suitable equipment should be provided by the Council to volunteer groups set up to assist with gully cleansing activities. • Recommendations from the BEST review into highway inspections be reported to this Committee. 	Cabinet considered the recommendations on 8 October 2024. The Leader agreed to write to MPs as requested. A further update will be presented to the Committee confirming other actions and a report dealing with the BEST recommendations on Highways Inspections will also be added to the work programme when ready.
4.	25 September 2024	Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service Annual	RESOLVED that the contents of the NFRS Annual Performance Report be noted and its	The OSC will receive further reports including

		Performance Report 2024/25	review continue to be included in the work programme on an annual basis.	inspection outcomes as appropriate.
5.	25 September 2024	Update on Library Service Redesign and Development	RESOLVED that: (a) The contents of the report be noted. (b) The progress and achievements of the service be noted. (c) The service priorities for 2024/25 and 2025/26, be noted. These included a review of the Library Service and the development of a new Library Strategy to reflect the government guidance due to be published.	The OSC will continue to monitor the service as appropriate.
6.	25 September 2024	Provision of Museum Services in Northumberland	RESOLVED that the Communities and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee: (a) Noted the presentation. (b) Supported the process that had been undertaken. They were of the opinion that it was important that accessibility to the county's heritage and cultural provision be improved for all Northumberland's residents. (c) Recommend that the Council progress with the Trade Unions engagement as outlined.	The Cabinet accepted the OSC's report on this matter at the meeting on 8 October 2024.
7.	30 October 2024	Places for People Leisure Introduction	RESOLVED that the presentation be noted.	A further presentation on whole year operations be presented to the OSC in 2025/26.
8.	27 November 2024	Highway Drainage Maintenance Action Plan	RESOLVED that the Communities and Place OSC: a) Thanked the administration for the additional funds that had been provided for the highway's drainage programme of work in 2024/25. b) Acknowledged the work that had been undertaken by officers since the meetings in June and July on the Highways issues.	Further reports be presented to the Committee as appropriate.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> c) Receive an update on the position with regard to the emptying of the gulley wagons in due course. d) Inform Cabinet that they supported the budget request in 2025/26 for more resource for preventative maintenance. e) Receive the update on the work undertaken on trees to date and that a further report be received in due course. 	
9.	27 November 2024	S106 Infrastructure Funding Statement 2023-2024	<p>RESOLVED that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The report and S106 Infrastructure Funding Statement for 2023-2024, be noted. b) A link to the Council's webpage regarding Sport & Play be circulated to members of the Communities & Place OSC following the meeting. 	This report continue to be presented annually.

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