



# Northumberland

## County Council

### CABINET

7 DECEMBER 2021

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### Summary of New Capital Proposals considered by Officer Capital Strategy Group

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**Report of:** Jan Willis, Interim Executive Director of Finance

**Cabinet Member:** Councillor Richard Wearmouth, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services

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#### 1. Purpose of Report

The following report summarises proposed amendments to the Capital Programme considered by the officer Capital Strategy Group via email on 5 November 2021.

#### 2. Recommendations

Cabinet is recommended to:

##### 2.1 Energising Blyth Programme - Culture Centre & Market Place:

Approve the commencement of design works for this project which is grant funded through the Future High Street Fund at a value of £7,253,198 included within the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan 2021-24. Note that a further report will be brought forward once the project develops to Outline Business Case stage and has been independently appraised.

##### 2.2 Energising Blyth Programme - Energy Central Campus (Phase 1):

Approve the acceleration of expenditure of £400,000 in 2021-22 for this project budgeted at £9,000,000 including a contribution of £2,500,000 from the Council which is included in the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan 2021-24. Note that a further report will be brought forward once the project develops to Outline Business Case stage and has been independently appraised.

**2.3 Energising Blyth Programme - NEP1 & Battleship Wharf:**

Approve a Capital Grant of £500,000 to the NEP1 and Battleship Wharf project externally funded through the Blyth Town Deal, and recommend the project progresses to formal submission to DLUHC noting that Northumberland Council is the accountable body for all the Energising Blyth Programme funds allocated by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) which includes Town Deal funding.

**2.4 England Coast Path, Infrastructure Grant Funded Works:**

Accept the grant award from Natural England of £145,649 for the construction of a section of the English Coastal Path route between Bamburgh and the Scottish Border and approve the project into the 2021-24 Medium Term Financial Plan with construction to commence later this financial year and complete in 2022/23.

**2.5 Noise Monitoring Equipment:**

Approve the proposal to purchase new noise monitoring equipment at a cost of £65,000 to be met by a revenue contribution to capital outlay (RCCO) from underspends within the 2021-22 Public Protection revenue budget.

**2.6 Off-street Parking provision in Boulmer:**

Approve an allocation of £10,000 from the overall capital provision for parking improvements included in the 2021-24 Medium Term Financial Plan, to enable detailed design work to proceed, including preparation of an application for planning approval, for a new 24 space off-street car park.

**2.7 Sustainable Warmth Grant (LAD 2):**

Accept a Local Authority Delivery Phase 2 (LAD2) grant award of £2,214,042 to deliver energy efficiency measures to 220 private owner-occupied homes in Northumberland.

**2.8 Wylam Wagonway Improvements:**

Accept a funding contribution of £518,343 from Sustrans for highway improvements to be added to the Council's capital programme in 2021-22 and agree to its expenditure on the works identified to the NCN 72 from Stephenson's Cottage, 0.7km west of Wylam, to the County boundary adjacent to Blaney Row, Newburn.

### **3. Links to Corporate Plan**

The Council's Capital Programme is consistent with the priorities in the Corporate Plan in particular the 'Living', 'Enjoying' and 'Thriving' priorities.

### **4. Background**

This paper summarises reports considered by the officer Capital Strategy Group on the allocation of funding within the Medium Term Plan to specific projects.

## **SUMMARY OF NEW CAPITAL PROPOSALS CONSIDERED BY OFFICER CAPITAL STRATEGY GROUP VIA EMAIL ON 5 NOVEMBER 2021**

### **5. Energising Blyth Programme - Culture Centre & Market Place**

- 5.1 The Group was asked to approve a proposal to construct a new Culture Centre in the Market Place in Blyth at a cost of £7,253,198.

#### **Background**

- 5.2 The Culture Centre & Market Place Project was included as a flagship scheme in the Future High Streets Fund (FHSF) Business Case submission to MHCLG in July 2020. The submission of the Business Case Submission was approved by Cabinet in June 2020.
- 5.3 The project will deliver a new purpose-built cultural facility in the centre of the town to provide a boost to the town's offer and introduce a new anchor destination and redesigned Market Place aimed at providing greater choice and improved environment whilst complimenting and enhancing existing leisure and cultural services within the town. The new town centre building will be constructed on the Market Place and is undergoing a rigorous Feasibility Study to assess the demand and operational mix of the facilities on offer including a multi-screen cinema, creative play, café, performance space and multi-use rooms.
- 5.4 The ambition is that the new Centre will activate the Market Place through the programming of complementary outdoor performances so there is a seamless experience of exciting cultural activity in and beyond the new building. Design branded routes with integrated arts interventions will enhance navigation, drawing local people and visitors into the town centre to a new destination of regional significance.
- 5.5 Through planning, inclusion and design, The Centre and Market Place improvements will also contribute to other important priorities in the town, including improving health & wellbeing, enhancing education opportunities, strengthening community cohesion, and reducing anti-social behaviour. The impacts will be measured against agreed benchmarks and programme of monitoring and evaluation with partners and complimentary programmes such as the Shaping Places for Healthier Lives led by the councils Public Health Team and the Energising Blyth Culture and Placemaking Programme.
- 5.6 The Market Place itself will be remodelled and landscaped to provide a welcoming, functional and flexible space in which people will wish to dwell. The redeveloped public space will encourage visitors to spend time and money in the area, providing space for outdoor public events to further activate and animate the area and improve the day and night-time economy.

## **Progress to date**

- 5.7 In January 2021, NCC was awarded £11.12m of funding from FHSF for the preferred option, which included the Culture Centre & Market Place project, a hotel and restaurant, Energy Central Campus (Phase 2) and The Link (cycling and walking improvements along to Bridge Street to the Quay).

## **Feasibility Study and Business Plan**

- 5.8 Development work commenced in Spring 2021 with the establishment of a Culture Workstream reporting to the Energising Blyth Programme Board and the commissioning of a Feasibility Study to establish the potential demand and viability of this new facility. Following on from this, consultants will be developing a business plan that will focus on developing a financially sustainable business model, underpinning a cultural organisation and venue that will endure in the long-term and will be accessible to a broad range of users.
- 5.9 The study and business plan will lay the foundations for subsequent work to identify operational and management model options including working with the private sector, reviewing commercial viability and cross subsidisation and/or establishing a new organisation to manage the facility. It will also provide the basis of the architectural design specification to ensure that the building is fit for purpose.

## **Design Team Appointment**

- 5.10 This project needs to be delivered with all FHSF funding spent by March 2024, which has required the Energising Blyth Programme Team through the Culture Workstream to commence with the appointment of a multi-disciplinary Design Team. The tender process is well advanced with the contract due to be awarded and the successful team mobilised in early December. This will trigger the start of capital spend on the project as profiled in the medium term financial plan.

## **Business Case Development**

- 5.11 The Feasibility, Business (Operational and Management) Planning and Design work will progress iteratively with each informing/steering the other. Both are critical to each stage of the Business Case. The Strategic Outline stage to be issued in Spring 2022 will reflect the outcomes of both including concept designs and potential operator requirements subject to both procurement and Subsidy Control Regulations.
- 5.12 The Culture Workstream regularly reports to the NCC EB Programme Board and the Blyth Town Deal Board ensuring that there is consistent oversight and monitoring of progress.

## Funding

- 5.13 The funding package and spend profile for the project is outlined below and includes Year 1 funds that were received by NCC in March 2021 (S31 grant) in readiness for delivery. It should be noted that there is currently no NCC capital contribution to this scheme. Given the ownership of the Market Place being with the Council and the tight delivery timescales for the FHSF, it was identified in the original funding business case that the Culture Centre design and build could be delivered by March 2024 and could therefore be entirely funded by FHSF.
- 5.14 However, there is a degree of flexibility in the overall programme budget to enable some NCC contribution to be made should this be required in order to maximise the scheme's impact on the town as it progresses through feasibility, design and business case development.

2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	Total Spend
£181,698	£3,626,599	£3,444,901	£7,253,198

The spend profile is 100% externally funded and aligns with the MTFP allocations for FHSF submitted in September 2021.

## CSG Recommendation

- 5.15 The Group supported the scheme and recommends Cabinet to approve the commencement of design work and accept a further report once the project develops to Outline Business Case stage and has been independently appraised.

## 6. Energising Blyth Programme - Energy Central Campus (Phase 1)

- 6.1 The Group received a proposal to build an Energy Central Campus in Blyth at a cost of £9,000,000.

## Background

- 6.2 The Energy Central Campus (ECC) is a key project in the £70m Energising Blyth Programme. Cabinet agreed NCC allocations for Future High Streets Fund (FHSF) projects on 9<sup>th</sup> June 2020 and at its meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> July 2021, agreed to establish the Energising Blyth Programme noting the identified funding allocations in the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for the combined FHSF and Town Deal programme. At its meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> October 2021, Cabinet received an update regarding the Energy Central Campus and agreed to establish a not-for-profit Company Ltd by Guarantee to provide the

vehicle through which all Energy Central Campus projects and activities will be delivered.

- 6.3 The above reports include an identified allocation of £15 million from NCC towards the development and delivery of the Energy Central Campus (Phases 1 & 2) alongside match funding contributions from partners. The ECC aims to create a new skills, education and innovation programme aimed at supporting and stimulating the growth of the renewable energy sector in Blyth and the wider Northeast by addressing the current and future workforce skills and innovation needs of businesses. It is proposed that the ECC will be the vehicle through which several priority skills and innovation projects and investments in Blyth will be delivered.
- 6.4 This report focuses on ECC Phase 1, the proposed £9m Energy Central Learning Hub, which is a new, portside industrial skills facility to expand the existing offer provided by Port Training Services and partners and prioritises the delivery of vocational skills, FE education and a dedicated STEM provision for young people in schools and colleges (STEM Hub). This is a new development that is currently in the advanced planning stages, with construction due to begin in summer 2022 in order to be operational for the start of the academic year in September 2023.
- 6.5 ECC Phase 1 has been confirmed in the Blyth Town Investment Plan (TIP) as part of the Blyth Town Deal which was awarded £20.9m funding in July 2021. A funding bid has also been submitted to the North of Tyne Combined Authority with the outcome expected later this year to provide match funding to the scheme.
- 6.6 The Energy Central Campus is an important priority for the wider Energy Central Partnership at the heart of its remit to drive growth of the offshore wind and renewable energy sector in Blyth, through the development of key industrial sites, building research capability and assets, developing a pipeline of skills to meet the needs of a growing sector and improving access to skilled job opportunities for the local and regional workforce.
- 6.7 The Energy Central Partnership brings together Advance Northumberland, Northumberland County Council, the Port of Blyth, and the Offshore Renewable Energy Catapult (OREC) to promote and grow the sector, enrich the workforce and develop expertise.
- 6.8 The Energy Central Campus developments will collectively deliver the following outcomes:
- A growing renewable energy sector in Blyth and the wider Northeast LEP area, providing more high-quality jobs and creating wealth in the local and regional economy.
  - A skilled and motivated workforce driving the growth of the sector.

- Boosting social mobility by enabling more local people (including young people) to secure well-paid, skilled employment, benefiting from higher earnings and a better quality of life.
- Growing ambition and aspirations among young people locally as they see the opportunities to enjoy a good career and lifestyle in the area.
- More local supply chain businesses benefitting from the opportunities offered by a growing offshore wind and renewable energy sector.

## Funding

6.9 The table below sets out the current indicative costs for the ECC Phase 1 project, based on a detailed specification and RIBA Stage 2 designs and a forecast funding profile which were presented to Cabinet on 12<sup>th</sup> October 2021 as part of the report about the Energy Central Campus. Costs are based on a projected opening date for the new facility of September 2023:

<b>ECC Phase 1 Capital Costs and Funding</b>	
<b>Costs</b>	<b>Total (£)</b>
Construction cost (includes 5% contingency and design risk)	7,089,675
Other capital costs (professional fees, inflation, FF&E; based on 5%)	354,484
Permanent relocation of tenant from existing PTS building	160,000
Temporary relocation of PTS (during build phase)	100,000
Low carbon measures / design features	300,000
Other costs	995,841
<b>Total Costs</b>	<b>9,000,000</b>
<b>FUNDING</b>	
North of Tyne Combined Authority	2,000,000
Town Deal	4,500,000
NCC (part of Town Deal match funding package)	2,500,000
<b>Total Funding</b>	<b>9,000,000</b>

## Acceleration of Spend

6.10 A significant amount of development work has been undertaken by the Energy Central partners that has created a potential to deliver the facility earlier than originally planned. The spend associated with the next stage of design and development work (taking the designs and costs from RIBA stage 2 currently up to stage 4 which is necessary to secure match funding and planning permission) is currently profiled for the next financial year (2022-23). However, this spending now needs to be accelerated into 2021/22 to ensure this key project remains on programme to become operational for the start of the 2023 academic year. To enable ECC Phase 1 to develop in line with business case and funding requirements it is proposed to bring forward existing NCC match funding currently profiled for later years.

- 6.11 This will fund the next stage of the design and project management costs for the Energy Central Campus Phase 1. This work needs to be progressed starting in November 2021 if the project is to meet its targeted completion date in Autumn 2023. The objective is for the facility to be open to learners in time for the academic year 2023/24. There is therefore now a requirement of approximately £400,000 spending in 2021-22 to support the project to RIBA stage 4 design.

## New Spend Profile

- 6.12 The required acceleration of spend will result in a funding profile for ECC Phase 1 highlighted in the table below, which aligns with the MTFP allocations as submitted in September 2021:

2021-2022 BUDGET			2022-2023 BUDGET			2023-2024 BUDGET			TOTAL BUDGET		
BUDGET	EXTERNAL FUNDING	NCC FUNDING	BUDGET	EXTERNAL FUNDING	NCC FUNDING	BUDGET	EXTERNAL FUNDING	NCC FUNDING	BUDGET	EXTERNAL FUNDING	NCC FUNDING
400,000	-	400,000	4,080,000	4,080,000	0	4,520,000	2,420,000	2,100,000	9,000,000	6,500,000	2,500,000

## CSG Recommendation

- 6.13 The Group supported the proposal and recommends Cabinet to approve the acceleration of expenditure of £400,000 in 2021-22 for this project budgeted at £9,000,000 including a contribution of £2,500,000 from the Council and note that a further report will be brought forward once the project develops to Outline Business Case stage and has been independently appraised.

## 7. Energising Blyth Programme - NEP1 & Battleship Wharf

- 7.1 The Group were requested to support a grant award of £500,000 externally funded through the Town Deal towards the NEP1 and Battleship Wharf project.

### Background

- 7.2 The NEP1 & Battleship Wharf Link project was originally proposed as a potential Town Deal scheme and incorporated into the Blyth Town Investment Plan in January 2021. Following Heads of Terms 'sign off' in August 2021, a project confirmation process has been undertaken with all project sponsors indicating the latest position and deliverability. This highlighted an opportunity to accelerate the works on the NEP1 & Battleship Wharf Link project, utilising match funding of £2.5m secured by the applicant from the North East LEP and North East Combined Authority, alongside Town Deal funding, to establish a start date as soon as possible.
- 7.3 Town Deal investment of £500,000 is designated to be used on a later stage of work as outlined below, and due to be spent in 2022/2023. Fast tracking

enables the Energising Blyth Programme to draw in the full outputs and benefits to be generated by the wider £3m project, which are significant.

- 7.4 Northumberland County Council is the accountable body for all of the Energising Blyth Programme funds allocated by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) which includes Town Deal funding. It is a condition of Town Deal funding that a Full Business Case (FBC) must be developed for each project, and that scrutiny and approval of each business case approval should be subject to a robust local assurance process.
- 7.5 DLUHC will release funding to NCC on a project-by-project basis, on confirmation that each project has successfully completed the local business case assurance process. Confirmation will be provided by submitting completed Town Deal 'Summary Documents' for each project to DLUHC.

### **Project Summary**

- 7.6 This project is proposed by Port of Blyth, a Trust Port who own several assets on the Blyth Estuary including the Battleship Wharf. The business case includes associated work that is to be funded by North of Tyne Combined Authority (NTCA) and the Northeast Local Enterprise Partnership (NELEP) and this investment has already been appraised on behalf of those organisations by Sanderson Weatherall and has funding approved in principle. The overall proposal is to build an internal heavy duty access link between three key strategic sites – Northumberland Energy Park (NEP) Phase 1, Phase 2 and Battleship Wharf.
- 7.7 The link provides access to deep water berths to move components and cranes between the sites which currently is not possible. A concrete heavy duty access route will be laid between the sites and will finish at the new dock at NEP1. The dock is owned by Advance Northumberland who have agreed Heads of Terms for the sale of the site to an investor for Cable Manufacture. The installation of a concrete apron at the quay edge will support the safe use of cranes and heavy plant loading components to vessels. Funding is also required towards the installation of a marine bollard on the West Staithes to provide safe passage and mooring for vessels entering and leaving the dock and for reclamation work to provide additional hard standing.
- 7.8 The fundamental aim is for the link to provide access to 5 operational berths at Battleship Wharf to unlock the full potential of the NEP sites and the Energy Central Project. Any large-scale port related inward investor on the sites will require a commitment to berth priority 1 in order to ensure timely movement of raw materials or finished products. This is not an issue for the first investor to use the NEP1 quay but subsequent developments requiring access to port facilities would then be more difficult to secure as they could have operations severely restricted due to factors outside of their control.

- 7.9 The works which are the subject of the £500,000 Town Deal application are for rock dredging to accommodate offshore 'jack up' vessels by removing some of the bed rock and replacing with 0.5m to 1m of crushed rock suitable as a base for the leg feet.

## Project Outputs

- 7.10 The Town Deal funded element of work aims to create 100 FTE indirect gross jobs from their investment. The full £3m project is projected to secure the following outputs:

- 500 FTE indirect jobs created
- 35 FTE temporary jobs supported during construction
- 12 jobs safeguarded
- 2km of newly built road
- 1,050,000m<sup>2</sup> – area of industrial land opened up to new uses
- 20,000m<sup>2</sup> of rehabilitated land

## Funding

- 7.11 The funding package and spend profile for the NEP1 & Battleship Wharf Link project is outlined below, it should be noted that there is no NCC capital contribution to this scheme.

2021-2022 BUDGET					2022-2023 BUDGET					OVERALL TOTAL			
TOWN DEAL	NTCA	NELEP	NCC	BUDGET	TOWN DEAL	NTCA	NELEP	NCC	BUDGET	TOWN DEAL	NTCA + NELEP	NCC	TOTAL BUDGET
	84,800	1,250,000	0	1,334,800	500,000	1,165,200	0	0	1,665,200	500,000	2,500,000	0	3,000,000

## CSG Recommendation

- 7.12 The Group supported the proposal and recommends Cabinet to approve the grant award of £500,000 funded through the Blyth Town Deal, and to recommend the project progresses to formal submission to DLUHC.

## **8. England Coast Path, Infrastructure Grant Funded Works**

- 8.1 The Group was asked to approve a project for the construction of an English Coastal Path route between Bamburgh and the Scottish Border at a cost of £145,649 funded by a grant award from Natural England.

### **Background**

- 8.2 In July 2013 Natural England's Coastal Access Scheme was approved by the Secretary of State and enacted the legislative provisions of the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 in respect of the government's intention to create a continuous walking route (National Trail) around the entire coastline of England and Wales. The National Trail (to be known in England as the England Coast Path) has been in development since 2013 and work on the Northumberland Coast commenced in 2016.
- 8.3 After extensive research and consultation with landowners, the route proposed by Natural England (in consultation with the County Council) between Amble and Bamburgh was submitted to the Secretary of State for approval in 2019 and was given approval in July 2020.
- 8.4 Works to establish the section of the England Coast Path between Seaton Sluice and Amble have already taken place (this section was the subject of a CSG report in December 2017) as have most of the works to establish the Amble to Bamburgh section (the subject of a more recent CSG report in December 2020). The Bamburgh to the Scottish border section still has one stretch that has yet to be approved by the Planning Inspectorate; however, the works on the remainder of this section have been determined and this report relates to the costs associated with them. When the final stretch of the England Coast Path is approved by the Planning Inspectorate, it will form the subject of a further CSG report.
- 8.5 While Natural England have undertaken the path alignment research and consultation work themselves, it has been agreed that the local highway authorities will undertake the path establishment works and will (once the path is complete and opened) be responsible for ongoing maintenance.
- 8.6 Funding for this work is offered to the Council according to the current National Trails funding formula where the government (through a grant to local highway authorities from Natural England/DEFRA), offer 100% of the establishment costs of new sections of trail and 75% of the ongoing maintenance costs.
- 8.7 The route of the path between Bamburgh and the Scottish Border is shown on detailed map attached. Over most of its length the route follows existing paths and recorded highways and footways; sections where new access is required have been negotiated and agreed (by Natural England).

- 8.8 NCC officers have submitted a grant bid for £145,649.04 and hope to commence works later this year and complete by September 2022.
- 8.9 The County Council has assessed and is satisfied that the offer made by Natural England will meet 100% of the costs to be incurred.

### **CSG Recommendation**

- 8.10 The Group supported the proposal and recommends Cabinet to accept the grant award from Natural England of £145,649 for the construction of an English Coastal Path route between Bamburgh and the Scottish Border, and approve the project into the 2021-24 Medium Term Financial Plan with construction to commence later this financial year.

## **9. Noise Monitoring Equipment**

- 9.1 The Group received a proposal to purchase Noise Monitoring Equipment at a cost of £65,000.

### **Background**

- 9.2 The Council has a statutory duty under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 s. 79 to investigate complaints of 'statutory nuisance'. Over 90% of the complaints received relate to noise.
- 9.3 Given the geographical size of Northumberland and the remoteness of many of its population centres combined with nature of nuisance complaints which can occur 24 hours a day 7 days a week, witnessing noise directly is usually impractical. Most investigations would utilise 'noise monitoring equipment' as an essential part of the investigation and evidence gathering process. The monitoring units are portable, highly accurate devices which can be left in a complainant's property and activated by them when they experience the noise they are complaining about. They allow for the secure, accurate recording of the subject noise and subsequent playback and analysis. It is also an established and accepted method of providing evidence to Courts in the event of prosecution and/or obtaining warrants.
- 9.4 The Environmental Health Team's stock of equipment all significantly predates Local Government Reorganisation in 2009 and is approaching the end of its effective life. Over half of the monitors are now inoperative and the manufacturers no longer support some of the models we use, meaning as equipment now becomes damaged it is no longer repairable.
- 9.5 Increasing case numbers and declining numbers of monitors are leading to increased waiting times, extended investigation times and declining customer

service. A further loss of equipment may lead to service failure and breach of statutory duty.

- 9.6 Subject to procurement procedures the intention is to purchase nine Norsonic 145 Noise Recording Systems. These comprise a precision sound level meter (SLM)/analyser, individual calibrator, microphone, tripod, memory card and associated software. This equipment is not simply a "decibel meter" but a sophisticated recording and analysis system which can be left in complainant's homes for relatively long periods of time and then used for subsequent review and analysis of the recordings.

### **CSG Recommendation**

- 9.7 The Group supported the proposal and recommends Cabinet to approve the proposal to purchase new noise monitoring equipment at a cost of £65,000 to be met by a revenue contribution to capital outlay (RCCO) from underspends within the 2021-22 Public Protection revenue budget.

### **10. Off-street Parking provision in Boulmer**

- 10.1 The Group were asked to consider a proposal to commence design for a new off-street car park in the village of Boulmer.

### **Key issues**

- 10.2 Boulmer village is subject to significant demand for parking, particularly from visitors. Off-street parking is limited, leading to significant on-street parking which is detrimental to the village environment and affects the quality of life of residents.
- 10.3 The Council has worked closely with the local Ward Member, Parish Council and residents to try and resolve these issues and has implemented 'on-street' parking restrictions to address problem areas. However there is now a need to address the lack of off-street parking and significant engagement has been undertaken in this regard. This engagement demonstrated support for the provision of a new off-street car park.

### **Background**

- 10.4 Due to its location on the Northumberland Coast, Boulmer is a popular visitor destination and is subject to significant amounts of traffic and demand for parking. There is one off-street car park located within the dunes known as the 'beach car park' which is currently managed by Longhoughton Parish Council under a lease with the landowner Northumberland Estates. The car park consists of a rough stone surface and is unmarked.

- 10.5 As well as visitors to the coast, the Memorial Hall in the village is a well-used community facility which creates further demand for parking. It does not have any parking provision so users park at the roadside.
- 10.6 Due to a lack of parking capacity in the village, significant on-street parking takes place, which causes problems for residents and through traffic.
- 10.7 In recent years the County Council has worked closely with the local Ward Member and Longhoughton Parish Council to address these issues and has provided on-street parking restrictions (double yellow lines) in targeted areas to ease congestion and protect forward visibility. The new restrictions have been effective in addressing problem areas. However, there is still a wider issue of parking capacity in general, in particular, a need to consider providing additional capacity to address demand and further reduce indiscriminate parking.
- 10.8 Following discussions with the local Ward Member, the Parish Council and local land owners, residents and statutory consultees were consulted on four potential options to address parking in the village and asked to indicate their preference.

The options were as follows:

**Option A**

- No change to existing provision. The existing off-street parking provision at the Beach car park would continue. No new off-street parking capacity would be created.

**Option B**

- Seek planning permission for the provision of a new maximum 24 space off-street public car park alongside the village hall. This car park would be managed and maintained by NCC, with arrangements in place to allow free parking for users of the village hall but with parking charges in place for other users.

**Option C**

- NCC to take over the responsibility for the management and maintenance of the existing Beach car park, this would include NCC seeking planning permission to extend the existing car park to provide an additional 20 spaces, and the introduction of parking charges for users

**Option D**

- This option combines both of the proposals detailed in Options B & C, with NCC seeking planning approval to develop a new 24 space car park next to the village hall as well as taking over responsibility for the Beach car park and seeking to extend it to provide an additional 20 spaces – thus increasing the

overall off-street parking capacity within the village by a maximum of 44 new spaces.

- 10.9 The consultation exercise has confirmed that there is a strong mandate for the provision of additional off-street parking capacity from the property owners in the village, and that this is supported by both the parish council and the local ward Member. The option that secured the most support was Option B which entails the provision of a new maximum 24 space off-street public car park alongside the Memorial Hall.

### **CSG Recommendation**

- 10.10 The Group supported the proposal and recommends Cabinet to approve the release of £10,000 from the capital funds allocated for car park improvement, to enable detailed design and costing of the proposed new car park to commence, including the submission of an application for planning approval. A further report will be brought forward to request the required funding for construction at the appropriate time.

## **11. Sustainable Warmth Grant (LAD 2)**

- 11.1 The Group were asked to consider acceptance of a LAD 2 grant award of £2,214,042 to deliver energy efficiency measures to 220 private owner-occupied homes in Northumberland.
- 11.2 Phase 2 of the Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery is being administered by the North East and Yorkshire Energy Hub (NEYH), through the Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA). NEYH was allocated a set amount of money by central Government, which was split between the constituent local authorities on a proportional basis, dependent on the number of households in fuel poverty. Northumberland County Council was allocated £2,214,042. This is broken down into £1,965,528 for the installation of measures, £216,256 for administration costs, and £32,258 for development funding (for the procurement framework fee and training costs).
- 11.3 Due to the grant funding and eligibility criteria, the scheme will assist in alleviating fuel poverty in Northumberland and reducing the county's emissions, an important step towards becoming a net zero county by 2030, as dictated by the climate emergency declaration.
- 11.4 The schemes are focused upon upgrading the worst insulated owner occupier and private rented homes with energy efficiency installations and low carbon heating. Upgrades on properties will follow a 'fabric first' approach and will utilise a mixture of the following measures: external wall insulation, underfloor insulation, loft insulation, air source heat pumps and solar PV.
- 11.5 The scheme will be operated in the same way as the current LAD1 scheme delivered through a partnership with E.ON. Home owners apply for funding

through the Council's Green Homes Grant webpage. Eligibility criteria are detailed on this webpage.

### **CSG Recommendation**

- 11.6 The Group supported the proposal and recommends Cabinet to accept the LAD 2 grant award of £2,214,042 and subsequent delivery of the scheme.

### **12. Wylam Wagonway Improvements**

- 12.1 The Group received a proposal to utilise a grant received from Sustrans on improvement works to the Wylam Wagonway.

### **Key issues**

- 12.2 The original Wylam Waggonway dates back to the mid-18<sup>th</sup> Century, although tracks were eventually removed in the 1970s before being converted to a public bridleway. The path has been maintained by the Council since this time and serves as a popular route for both leisure and commuters along the Tyne Valley.
- 12.3 A significant section of the Waggonway from Stephenson's Cottage, 0.7km west of Wylam, to the County boundary adjacent to Blaney Row, Newburn is in disrepair and no longer suitable for a range of users. Sustrans, via a DfT grant, have approached the County Council following a review of cycleways in the region in need of repair or upgrade.
- 12.4 The total amount secured for improving the highway infrastructure is £518,343. Sustrans has agreed to release this amount to the Council subject to formal agreement. The works must be completed by the end of March 2022.

### **Background**

- 12.5 Sustrans has recently completed a review of the National Cycle Network, auditing provision and condition of the current infrastructure. Numerous sections were deemed no longer fit for purpose and NCN status was withdrawn in 2020, whereas other sections were highlighted for immediate improvement, where routes still serve significant local value.
- 12.6 As part of a package of measures funded by the DfT, Sustrans highlighted a number of cycleways that required urgent repair and that due to their nature could be carried out within the 2021/ 22 financial year. This included NCN 72.
- 12.7 The proposed improvements cover approximately 2.3km of traffic-free bridleway, from Stephenson's Cottage, 0.7km west of Wylam, to the County

boundary adjacent to Blaney Row, Newburn. The land forming the Waggonway is owned by the Council.

12.8 The specification for the cycleway that will be delivered as far as is reasonably practical within the timescales, the topography of the site and within budget limitations is as follows:

- The Project will be developed in accordance with LTN 1/20 and Sustrans' National Cycle Network design principles;
- The existing shared space will be widened to a desirable width of 4 meters with an absolute minimum width of 3 metres at constraints, or as wide as is reasonable within the constraints of the site topography;
- The surface material should be smooth, sealed solid surface;
- Access controls should be (re)designed so they are accessible to all users;
- Improved signage should be provided along route;
- Northumberland County Council will be responsible for the detailed design of the Works and seek approval of the design from Sustrans prior to delivery;
- Northumberland County Council will be responsible for delivering the Works to the approved design;
- Sustrans can support Northumberland County Council with the design, communication and community consultation aspects of the project.

12.9 The grant funding is capped and any overrun of costs would need to be met by the Council. However, officers are confident that there is sufficient flexibility in the requirements of the scope of the project to allow costs to be confined within the grant provided.

### **CSG Recommendation**

12.10 The Group supported the proposal and recommends Cabinet to accept the grant award of £518,343 into the 2021-22 Capital Programme and authorise delivery of the scheme.

### **Implications**

<b>Policy</b>	The capital programme is part of the Medium-Term Financial Plan 2021-24. The plan supports the Corporate Plan.
<b>Finance and value for money</b>	The report outlines proposed project allocations and amendments to the approved Capital programme. The financial implications of these proposals are outlined in the main body of the report.

<b>Legal</b>	There are no direct legal implications.
<b>Procurement</b>	In line with all other capital expenditure, the additional spend will be subject to the Council's recognised procurement procedures.
<b>Human Resources</b>	Not applicable.
<b>Property</b>	The properties affected by the proposals are identified in the main body of the report.
<b>Equalities</b> (Impact Assessment attached) Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	Not applicable.
<b>Risk Assessment</b>	The risks associated with the proposals are regarded as acceptable but these risks will continue to be reviewed up to and during implementation of the proposals.
<b>Crime &amp; Disorder</b>	There are no Crime and Disorder implications.
<b>Customer Consideration</b>	There are no Customer Considerations.
<b>Carbon reduction</b>	Carbon Reduction measures have been considered within each project.
<b>Health &amp; Wellbeing</b>	There are no Health and Wellbeing implications.
<b>Wards</b>	All wards

### **Background Papers:**

Medium Term Financial Plan 2021-24

### **Report sign off:**

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

	<b>Name</b>
Monitoring Officer/Legal	Helen Lancaster
Executive Director of Finance and S151 Officer	Jan Willis
Chief Executive	Daljit Lally
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