

Build forward better

Our medium-term plan for 2021-22 and 2022-23

Appendix 4 – Cumulative impact assessment



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1. Foreword from the Deputy Leader of the Council, Cllr Joyce McCarty



Over the past year, the impact of COVID-19 on the city has been felt in relation to health, the economy, and society. We have seen the tragic loss of life, and serious and potentially long-lasting impacts on peoples' physical and emotional health and wellbeing, whether as a direct result of the virus, or the economic destruction which has been caused by the essential but damaging lockdowns. Because of existing, longstanding structural inequalities in our economy the impacts of COVID-19 have been felt, and will continue to be felt hardest, by the most vulnerable members of our communities.

The pandemic is presenting us with huge uncertainty and so far, has cost the council at least £60 million. This comes on the back of a decade of deep and severe government cuts in public spending. Local government has borne a disproportionate share of this burden. The deliberate policy of austerity inflicted on us by government means that, as a council, we are on course to have lost over £335 million from our budget over this time. Austerity is certainly not over for us.

Our city, partners and residents have made huge sacrifices and there is no immediate end in sight. Central government continues to test our resilience. We have no medium-term clarity as the government has again announced only a one-year Spending Round. They have also tied our hands to regressive taxation on our residents through the 3% adult social care precept as part of the Council Tax bill. We still have no clarity on the public health grant. Our financial position remains difficult and the need to achieve savings and transform services continues.

Despite these sustained pressures, our priority is to make sure the most vulnerable in our communities are protected. Newcastle has an increasing proportion of older people, people who have complex needs and greater numbers of people with learning and physical disabilities. Our priority is to help people get the right care and enable them to live well and independently in their own homes, maintaining contact with family and friends and being part of their local community.

The businesses and employees in our city also face an unclear future as we feel our way through the consequences of Brexit and try to make sense of the new arrangements. This brings with it the prospect of economic uncertainty for future years ahead. Job losses from the change that this brings, coupled with the fallout from the pandemic are inevitable. Nevertheless, we will continue to be a proud, outward looking city, making the most of our international links to benefit our local economy.

We are committed to Build Forward Better through these challenges. Our vision for a Net Zero city by 2030 creates our foundation for innovation and drives our economic vision - doing our best to both protect current jobs and create new ones at pace. Developing the skills of Newcastle's workforce, supporting business growth and job creation are key to generating the income needed to sustain services, protect the vulnerable and look after our health and the environment.

We have a vision for a Newcastle where the benefits of growth are shared fairly and there is opportunity for all. Vibrant, prosperous and inspirational, our great city works to give children the best start in life. Opportunities for education, a thriving economy with successful businesses and more and better-quality jobs help people to get on instead of getting by.

Newcastle remains a great place to live, work and visit. We are defiant and resolute in our ambition.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has responded to our consultation. Taking into account the cumulative effects of our current environment is necessary to illustrate how the persistent and severe nature of these difficult decisions is impacting on our communities. Despite the limitations placed on us, we continue to prioritise services that make the biggest difference to those in greatest need. We will work hard to protect the most vulnerable in our city from the worst effects of government cuts, the pandemic, and the consequences of Brexit. We are determined to invest in our city to build confidence in the future.

2. Context

Newcastle has faced cuts that are unfair and disproportionate; more than twice the national average since 2010. Since then a combination of government grant cuts and unfunded cost pressures have seen a cumulative cut of over £335 million from our budget. We have done well to manage these cuts so far, but people have felt the impact on the services we deliver. This year, the financial challenges created by the impact of COVID-19 in addition to over a decade of austerity in local government, cannot be underestimated.

At the same time, demand for our services continues to rise. The number of vulnerable adults (frail elderly people or those with learning disabilities) and vulnerable children (those at risk of domestic violence, harm, or neglect) are all increasing.

We are almost entirely reliant on Council Tax and retained business rates to fund our services. This is in the context of the government's welfare reforms which are estimated to reduce working age benefits in Newcastle by £129 million by the end of 2022-23.

This report focuses on the impact of our 2021-22 and 2022-23 proposals. In these tough times, we have sought to achieve two things – to protect the most vulnerable from the worst effects of government cuts, compounded by the COVID-19 virus, and to invest in our city to build confidence in the future.

3. Our approach

We have a legal duty to set a balanced budget each year. To meet our commitment to a fairness test for key decisions and our legal obligations under the Equality Act 2010, we carry out integrated impact assessments (IIAs) of proposals that will result in a change to services in the next financial year.

IIAs are key to making decisions based on the fullest possible understanding of how proposals to change services or policies are likely to affect people and places in the city, particularly our most vulnerable residents and communities. We publish these as part of our consultation and the feedback we receive is used to further review and refine our proposals – the updated IIAs for proposals that will impact on services and polices in 2021-22 are published alongside this cumulative impact assessment

As well as the impact of individual proposals, it is essential to consider how our overall plan could affect people. In this report, we have tried to consider the emerging cumulative impacts of our proposals from several perspectives. The information and evidence used to inform this cumulative analysis draws on the individual IIAs produced for proposals that will change services in 2021-22.

In addition to this, we go beyond our legal requirement to look at how proposals affect certain groups, but we also identify issues that could increase the impact on those groups because of changes resulting from government decisions, or wider economic, social and environmental conditions. For a full list of impacts see Annex 1.

To do this we ensure our fairness principles are embedded throughout the whole process. We continue to be guided in this by the Newcastle Fairness Commission in their report Fair share, Fair play, Fair go, Fair say:

- **Fair share:** where people can expect fair outcomes a fair share of services, according to their needs.
- **Fair play:** where people can have confidence that decisions are made in an even-handed, open and transparent manner, according to evidence.
- **Fair go:** where people have opportunities to participate and a chance to fulfil their aspirations for the future.
- **Fair say:** where people feel included in their city, communities, and neighbourhoods, given fair hearing and an effective voice in decision-making.

We recognise that these are difficult principles to apply during continuing budget reductions. But it's when the times are toughest that fairness is most important.

4. Impact on people with protected characteristics

The Equality Act 2010 requires us to consider how our decisions may impact on or affect certain groups and take steps to remove or reduce any unequal outcomes. The characteristics that are protected by the Equality Act 2010 are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage or civil partnership (in employment only)
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

This section outlines the impacts that we have identified that may affect these groups and the actions we are taking to mitigate them.

4.1 Disabled people

Key facts and figures:

- 18.7% of people in Newcastle have a long-term health problem or disability that limits their day-to-day activity to some degree. This compares to 17.9% of the England and Wales average. Of these, just over half are limited a lot (26,661 people) and the rest a little (25,916). (Census, 2011).
- Of the 41,165 total pupils in Newcastle schools, 6,384 have some form of special educational need with 1,368 having an education, health and care plan. (Schools Census, October 2020).

We know that disabled people are more likely to experience poorer outcomes in employment, income and education. They are more likely to face discrimination and negative attitudes, be a victim of crime and experience problems with housing and transport.

The disadvantage faced by disabled people imposes significant economic, social and human costs, on themselves, their families, carers and friends. The nature of disability can also cause higher living costs to cover such things as high utility bills, taxis and specialist food. Disabled people can be disproportionately impacted by a combination of reduction in benefits, including support for disabled children and support available to disabled people in work.

What are we doing?

We continue to look at how we transform services for people with multiple and complex needs. We are continuing to invest in new services to ensure people have access to support that is appropriate to their needs. This includes schemes to support people with learning disabilities, autism, or both, and younger adults who need support as a result of being

vulnerable. We are reviewing our supported housing options for people with a learning disability or autism, some of which need significant investment to remain suitable for use. Also, over the past four years, we have created new types of housing to offer the right level of support and greater independence for people living there.

In 2017 we developed the Newcastle Street Charter. The Charter was initiated and led by blind and partially sighted people and local sight loss organisations. It was developed in consultation and with the support of disabled people, and other groups and organisations in the city. It is divided into sections that highlight the main issues disabled people face when negotiating the built environment in Newcastle. It aims to remove or reduce the barriers that disabled people and others with mobility issues face in our city and sets out actions and commitments that everyone involved will abide by. In February 2020, consultation took place to review the Charter, which resulted in recommendations made to improve it further. We are currently exploring how our reporting and monitoring systems can be improved in relation to complaints relating to key issues in the charter.

We support all of our disabled communities and will continue to celebrate their diversity, On 3 December 2020, the annual celebration of International Day for Disabled people took place with the theme, 'Not all Disabilities are Visible'. This focused on raising awareness and understanding of disabilities that are not immediately apparent, such as mental illness, chronic pain or fatigue, sight or hearing impairments, diabetes, brain injuries, neurological disorders, learning differences and cognitive dysfunctions, among others. We ran a social media campaign, speaking to people online about the importance of the day and raising awareness around the issues involved. Members of our Disabled Employee Network group also spoke on social media to promote the help and support available to any disabled member of staff.

In addition to this, we continue to work with pan-disability groups to raise awareness and understand how any changes to services as a result of the pandemic impact on disabled people.

4.2 Older people

Key facts and figures:

- There are currently 43,800 people aged over-65 living in Newcastle. (Office for National Statistics (ONS) mid-year estimates, 2019).
- The latest projections suggest our later life population will make up 17.6% of Newcastle total population by 2043 (ONS mid-year estimates, 2018).

Newcastle's population has a growing proportion of older people, some of which have complex needs including learning and physical disabilities, and proving adequate care is a key priority for us.

In recent years, the country has faced a crisis in adult social care as a result of reduced funding from government, rising demand, increasing complexity of that demand and unavoidable cost pressures. To this challenging situation we must now also add the short and long-term results of the COVID-19 pandemic, which will increase both demand and complexity further.

Despite these pressures, we have continued to provide good quality care. In our most recent Adult Social Care Users Survey 2020, 63% of respondents were satisfied overall with their care and support. 79% said care and support services helped them to have as much or adequate control over their daily lives and 92% said that care services make them feel safe and secure.

What are we doing?

We provide critical social care services to some of the city's most vulnerable adults, as well as protecting those at risk of abuse or neglect through our safeguarding function. This ranges from frail older people, to people of all ages with physical disabilities, learning disabilities and/or autism, and mental health conditions or cognitive impairments like dementia.

We have transformed the way we deliver and commission our adult social care services over the last decade and are successfully managing demand for these services in the face of increasing financial and demographic pressures.

We cannot meet the financial challenges facing adult social care by reducing staff numbers and we have no plans to do this. We continue to explore new ways of working but we cannot deliver our essential statutory functions and service transformation with fewer staff.

Our plans for 2021-22 and beyond remain focussed on two principles - making sure we provide a level of support that is appropriate and proportionate to the needs of the people we support, and ensuring we provide the right types of support that enable people to live as independently as possible.

We will also ensure that people who can pay a contribution towards the cost of their care do so, and that this contribution is based on expectations laid out in the Care Act 2014 Regulations. Key to all of this, will be working with our partners across social care, health and housing, to test out new ways of delivering health, wealth and wellbeing for the most vulnerable in our communities. We will seek to do this in a way that maximises independence and promotes individual outcomes whilst also making efficiencies across the whole system where we can. Through this we will ensure that we get the most from the new, exciting partnerships created through the Newcastle Alliance and Collaborative Newcastle.

4.3 Carers

Key facts and figures:

- Almost one in 10 people in Newcastle provide some unpaid care (Census 2011); most carers are aged 25-64 and carers are more likely to be women.
- According to both Age UK and Carers UK, the increase in the older population is projected to accelerate over the next 20 years resulting in higher numbers of older people providing unpaid care compared to the whole population.
- Census 2011 data indicates only a small proportion of carers are working full-time. In the Carers Survey 2014, 55% of respondents were retired or self-employed, 21% were not in paid work for other reasons and 14% were not in paid work due to caring.

- In the Census 2011, 2,355 children and young people aged between 0-24 years acknowledged that they provided unpaid care. 1,769 provided 1 to 19 hours; 299 provided 20 to 49 hours and 287 provided 50 or more hours each week.

National research carried out by ONS and Carers UK during the pandemic shows a significant increase in the number of people taking on caring roles and responsibilities with the number of unpaid carers increasing by an estimated 4.5 million on top of the 9.1 million who already had caring responsibilities; a total of 13.6 million. Women are still more likely than men to take on caring roles and people aged between 45 to 54 years are most likely to report having caring responsibilities.

For those who were already providing care and support before the COVID-19 pandemic, we have seen their caring responsibilities increase on average by ten hours a week, an increase that can be attributed to furlough, working from home, reduced or suspended care packages and service provision for the person they are caring for significantly reduced or closed.

Shielding and lockdown measures have and continue to prevent some people providing care to others and carers looking after people they live with have seen significant impact on their personal relationships and their mental health; with women being more likely to report poor mental health.

What are we doing?

We have created a Welfare and Wellbeing service, connecting those most vulnerable people in our communities in need of support with food and medicines, especially those classed in the highest level of vulnerability and in need of shielding. Over 200 voluntary organisations registered to respond to requests, drawing on 1,500 offers of support from volunteers

We continue to routinely refer carers identified by our team at Community Health and Social Care Direct or social work teams to our commissioned carer support services both of which have remained open throughout the pandemic. Routine referrals for carers are also being completed by our day care providers to enable carer support. Newcastle Carers has and continues to provide continuity of care and support with a steady increase in carers registering for their services throughout the year.

The majority of support offered is over the telephone, but virtual groups and limited, safe, face-to-face contact is taking place. British Red Cross are continuing to provide the Emergency Card scheme and some carers have used it to access additional welfare support. As a local authority we continue to offer statutory adult needs assessments and carer assessments of which there may be a number of outcomes including information and advice, referral into carer support services, carers wellbeing fund, care around the adult with needs or a carers break personal budget.

Our proposals for 2021-22 include adding a weekly arrangement fee of £5 when we are asked by a person to commission services in their home or their community on their behalf. In the consultation responses, some voluntary and community sector organisations highlighted the need to ensure service users and their family and friends, carers have full information about the change and the services available to them if they choose to arrange their own services.

Our IIA for this proposal identifies potential disadvantage to people who are more likely to require care and support and potential increased pressure on unpaid carers, either because they provide more support, or in administering support on behalf of the person they care for. We will continue to operate a charging and financial assessment policy that only requires people to pay a fair contribution based on their ability to pay and consider exceptional cases on a case by case basis. We will provide information to people who are affected by this proposal, signposting them to other sources of support and guidance and continue to offer needs assessments to carers independently of the person they care for. We will keep this proposal and our mitigations under review.

4.4 Children and young people

Key facts and figures:

- Newcastle continues to have a large number (11,980) of children aged under 16 living in low income-families (25.4% of 16-year-olds), compared with 16.8% in England. (Census, 2011).
- Of the 41,165 total pupils in Newcastle schools, 6,384 have some form of special educational need with 1,368 having an education, health and care plan. (Schools Census, October 2020).
- 60,700 people (20% of the population) are aged 15-24 years old – this unusually high proportion reflects the number of students living in the city. Nearly 50,000 students are enrolled at our two universities.

Experiences in childhood profoundly influence people's life chances as adults, including the likelihood of participating in further and higher education, future earning potential and the probability of owning a home. Children receiving free school meals are still less likely to get five good GCSEs than those who do not.

Children in out-of-work households are at greater risk of poverty, however there are now more children classed as living in poverty from households where someone is working (in-work poverty). Children of lone parents, disabled children, children in large families (four or more children) and those from certain (but not all) black and minority ethnic backgrounds are also at greater risk of living in poverty. The highest levels of child poverty are found in households with children aged 0-4.

Nationally and locally, there is rising demand for children's social care and our young people are exhibiting increasingly complex needs. Between 31 December 2019 and the same date in 2020 the number of children in our care increased from 650 to 689. This compares to 118 per 10,000 children compared to the national average of 67 per 10,000 children and a Statistical Neighbour (other Local Authorities with similar demographics to Newcastle) average of 109 per 10,000.

What are we doing?

Through our current service proposals, our aim is to work earlier and better with children, young people and families who need support so that families stay safely together. Our aim is to work with the wider family and any extended support network to encourage long-term changes at home that keep children safe, boost family resilience and create stable homes

where children can thrive. An independent evaluation of this approach has shown its effectiveness in reducing the number of children subject to child protection plans and safely and sustainably reducing the numbers of children in care.

We are also reviewing how we provide residential care for children and young people. In future we want to improve how we provide this service by having an appropriate mix of five smaller children's homes in order to provide emergency provision for short-term needs and loving and stable long-term homes where this is the right thing to do. This is part of our work to reduce our use of externally provided residential care and to work with families to support them to stay together safely.

Our Right Child Right Care improvement programme has invested in the skills and capacity of our workforce, significantly increased the number of Newcastle foster carers and piloted new models of residential care. Despite the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, our staff are better able to provide high quality and earlier support and more children in care in Newcastle grow up in the city, closer to their friends, schools and communities. With Department for Education funding we will build on these successes through the Family Valued programme from December 2020.

Through the Family Valued programme, we will:

- Invest in new ways of working and training and development so that our workforce and partners work with children and families, recognising strengths and building on assets.
- Invest in new teams that promote and model these new ways of working, including family partners, relational advanced practitioners and family group conferencing
- Continue to grow our fostering service so that more vulnerable children grow up in loving family homes.

Working with partners to keep children safe, be included, continue to learn and ultimately to have the skills to move into the world of work is important for children and young people and for the future of our city.

The strength of relationships across the city have helped get children back to school safely, creatively enabled the transportation of special educational needs and disability pupils whilst maintaining social distancing and secured and distributed digital equipment to vulnerable pupils. Building on these relationships and partnerships is crucial to our ambitious plans in the year ahead.

During the past year, the council has continued working with a wide range of stakeholders to enable children in Newcastle to have the best start in life. We are busy working in partnership with stakeholders, to design and develop a system wide integrated approach to early intervention and prevention. Children and Families Newcastle will help children and young people thrive and achieve by bringing several universal and targeted services into a single service.

Supporting schools and families who are struggling to budget for food during the pandemic has been a key priority. We produced several simple resources to help families to provide healthy low-cost meals for their children and disseminated these widely. Additionally, at a time when dentists were closed to all but emergencies, we worked with the community dental service at Newcastle Hospitals NHS Trust, to produce a series of short films and a guide for parents and carers on looking after their oral health.

The COVID Winter Grant Scheme also supported those most in need across the city for Christmas school holidays, contributing to the cost of food, fuel, and essentials.

The Holiday Activity Fund provides children and young people in the city with access to food and physical activity over the summer holidays. Working in partnership with over 60 community projects and coordinated by StreetGames, the project built upon the success of the 2019 Best Summer Ever.

Constrained by COVID-19 restrictions, partners including Barnardo's, Children North East, Streetwise and Active Newcastle creatively distributed 10,000 activity packs, 500 sport equipment packs and with Fareshare food, 3,000 food parcels to families most in need.

The latest available figures about young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) show Newcastle to be consistent with the national picture. The proportion of 16-17-year olds who are classed as NEET, or whose activity is not known in Newcastle is 8.3% compared to England average of 8.2% (Department for Education, November 2020).

Our successful apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship schemes are helping some of our most vulnerable young people gain valuable skills and employment experience. In addition, the North of Tyne Combined Authority has a key focus on developing an inclusive economy, with priorities including driving up educational standards and giving everyone the opportunity to thrive. The devolution agreement included a North of Tyne Education Improvement Challenge. We are developing the approach across Newcastle, North Tyneside, Northumberland and alongside government, to secure this investment to support children and young people throughout their education to achieve their potential.

Newcastle continues to be one of the first cities in the UK to join the UNICEF UK Child Friendly City Programme. The programme theme badges were identified in October 2017 during the discovery phase of the three-year programme by local children and young people: Safe and Secure, Healthy and Equal, and Included. An action plan, now being delivered, was developed by children, young people and other stakeholders

Connecting with children and young people from across the city is fundamental to the success of the programme. A youth steering group has been created called the Young People's Union, which is open to any young person aged between 11 and 18 who lives, learns, or works in Newcastle. The group have written and published their first newsletter, developed a youth participation consultation tool, and agreed who will become youth champions to represent each theme area.

4.5 Sex

Key facts and figures:

- 90% of lone parents in Newcastle are women and more than 50% are in employment. Of all children living in poverty 61.9% (9,815 children) are living in lone parent families, compared with 6,040 children in poverty with a couple. (Census, 2011).
- A higher proportion of women in Newcastle work part-time than men; 40.4 compared with 14.0 % (ONS annual population survey, 2019-20).

- A high percentage of women in the North East work part-time in the public, voluntary and community sectors. Continued reduction in the public and voluntary sector workforces impact disproportionately on this group (ONS annual population survey, 2019-20).
- Men working full-time earn considerably more than women, with men earning £599.7 per week and women £515.4 (ONS annual population survey, 2019-20).

What are we doing?

Through our community family hubs, we continue to offer universal and targeted services that, along with childcare, provide information and advice and links to Jobcentre Plus to encourage and support parents and carers who wish to consider training and employment. Meeting the statutory duty to ensure affordable, high-quality childcare is available for families on low incomes means that there are childcare places to support parents who wish to work or train.

As one of the city's major employers, we provide good quality full and part-time employment, access to flexible working, job share and a range of leave provision because we recognise that inclusive policies help to address gender inequality created by women combining work and caring responsibilities. Our investment in the city's transport infrastructure also benefit women, who are more likely to use public transport to secure employment, get to work and accompany children to school.

Reports of violence and abuse against women and girls have been increasing nationally since 2008-09. While violent crime against men is also increasing, it is not to the same extent. This trend has not been seen recently in Newcastle: domestic abuse crimes reduced by 10% in 2019-20, compared to the previous year and there were reduced levels of sexual offences recorded in 2019-20. The decrease during 2019-20 is in part due to the impact of the first COVID-19 lockdown, during which time there was an overall decrease in all crime.

Newcastle continues to have high numbers of victims of domestic abuse assessed as at high risk (of serious harm or homicide) with 47% of those being repeat victims. In the last financial year 77% of victims were female and 23% male. Despite a reduction in the overall number of victims recorded there have been increases in the number of black and minority ethnic (BAME) victims and in the number of victims over the age of 55.

We commission specialist domestic violence refuge accommodation, outreach support services for victims and their children and independent domestic violence advisors for high risk victims along with an independent sexual violence advisor services for victims of sexual violence. Since opening in December 2017, Newcastle's purpose-built refuge has been fully occupied. We continue to fund a voluntary programme for perpetrators to support them to address their offending behaviour.

A number of services in Newcastle also provide therapeutic support for children to support their recovery from the impact of living with domestic abuse. Also, through Operation Encompass, all schools in Newcastle are provided with information to enable them to support students identified as living with domestic abuse. Community family hub and intensive family support teams continue to support families in need due to domestic abuse and related issues.

In partnership with Rape Crisis Tyneside and Northumberland, our Shout Up! campaign, raises awareness of sexual violence and harassment in pubs, clubs and venues across the city. We want Newcastle to be a safe place for socialising, supporting venues and their patrons to be collectively responsible for the safety of women and calling out sexually aggressive behaviour. We continue to deliver safeguarding and vulnerability training to a range of professionals in the night-time economy including taxi drivers, door staff and bar staff to broaden the range of people who are understand how to recognise and respond to safeguarding and community safety issues in communities. However, both Shout Up! and staff training in the night-time economy are on hold due to COVID-19 restrictions.

A new domestic abuse statutory duty for local authorities will be enacted in April 2021. We are in a good position to meet the duty due to the level of provision for victims in the city, both through commissioned services and other voluntary sector provision. However, we will need to engage with the sector and other statutory partners to ensure that we are compliant with the requirements from central government.

4.6 Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) communities

Key facts and figures:

- The latest figures suggest the BAME population living in Newcastle is 33,000 - 13.5% of the whole population. (ONS annual population survey, 2019-20).
- 5.9% of households don't have English as their main language (Census 2011).
- Census 2011 data shows that younger age groups tend to be more diverse with larger proportions of people being from a BAME background.
- Reported religion or belief of people in Newcastle from the Census 2011 tells us that 56.4% of people are Christian and 28.3% stated they have no religion. The next largest religion is Muslim with 6.3% and which has almost doubled over the last 10 years.
- One in every four school children in the most recent intake in Newcastle comes from a BAME background, a proportion that has increased significantly over recent years. This means that one out of every five school children overall do not necessarily have English as their first language.
- The unemployment rate in the BAME population over the age of 16 continues to be higher in the North East (10.1%) and Newcastle (6.9%) compared to the England average (6.8%). Additionally, a greater proportion of the city's BAME residents aged 16-64 are economically inactive (37.6%), exceeding both the North East (33.8.%) and England (28.0%) averages. (ONS, 2019-20).

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic shone a light on long-standing, structural race inequality in Britain, and we have long known that people from a range of ethnic minorities are treated less fairly across all areas of life. BAME communities tend to represent a higher proportion of the population in some of the most deprived areas of the city and are therefore potentially more vulnerable to reductions in some of our services. Most children with additional languages live in the more deprived areas of the city.

Women from BAME communities, especially those who are experiencing poverty and whose first language is not English, are less likely to be able to access information. We also know

that those who face language barriers may find it more difficult to access digital and social care services.

We also know that people from BAME communities are more likely to be impacted by hate crime and this can have a negative impact on their wellbeing and inclusion. We recognise that the murder of George Floyd in the United States last year led to hurt and anger with public concern expressed about ingrained, systemic racial profiling and racism that exists against BAME, especially black, people in Britain.

What are we doing?

Through Stop Hate, people can report hate incidents both over the phone and online, so that they can be dealt with appropriately and victims directed to support.

We support our BAME communities and will continue to celebrate diversity, listen to our communities and work with minority groups to make space for conversations to take place that can shape our city going forward.

Black History Month takes place in the UK every year during October, celebrating the achievements of BAME people throughout history and recognise wider issues of our BAME communities. In 2020, a range of activities were hosted across different institutions, including live streamed event through our libraries, social media posts about black cultural icons who visited the North East, and seminar about BAME people in public. We also marked 'Show Racism the Red Card' and 'Hate Crime Awareness Week' by lighting up the Civic Centre red in a symbolic gesture of support, along with a campaign to encourage people to report hate crime.

We support BAME people into employment by commissioning organisations such as Asian Business Connexions to run programmes aimed at giving young people the skills and experience to find employment and Jobs Education and Training, who support people from BAME communities to improve their skills, including verbal and written communication.

Newcastle has remained a City of Sanctuary, having welcomed people seeking sanctuary for many years. City of Sanctuary has worked in partnership with the voluntary and community sector to coordinate the response provided to new arrivals and those seeking to make Newcastle their home. Newcastle schools, universities, health services and the arts and cultural sector have been able to engage with issues relating to those seeking refuge and have been encouraged to embed ways of working that promote integration and inclusion. Through City of Sanctuary engagement work, we have sought to better understand and promote the voices of those seeking refuge in our city. Outputs from these ongoing engagements will guide the focus and tailoring of future City of Sanctuary activities.

The unequal risks and impacts of COVID-19 have demonstrated the importance of engaging with all our diverse communities, ensuring our communications are accessible and inclusive and improving our understanding of the varied cultural contexts of people's lives.

During the pandemic, we have created multiple language videos targeting vital COVID-19 public health messages towards BAME communities, specifically in Bengali, Urdu, Hindi, Arabic, Romanian, Czech and Romani. These have been viewed over 30,000 times and reached 106,00 people. The videos received positive feedback from as far away as Romania, France and Germany. This was achieved by working in partnership with Connected Voice Health and Race Equality Forum (Haref), Riverside Health Project and

Northumbria Police. Translated public health messages were also issued during Ramadan, Eid and Diwali working in partnership with faith leaders.

We have developed a BAME Community Leaders WhatsApp group and COVID-19 Community Health Champions model, focussing on BAME communities. Champions have been recruited from a diverse range of backgrounds to ensure a dialogue with our communities, providing accurate public health messages and building insight into COVID-19 related concerns, beliefs, or behaviours directly from our communities.

We have also provided extra support, advice, and guidance in relation to COVID-19 to our own BAME employees.

4.7 Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people

Key facts and figures:

- The proportion of the UK population aged 16 years and over identifying as heterosexual or straight decreased from 95.3% in 2014 to 94.6% in 2018 (Experimental statistics on sexual orientation in the UK, 2018).
- The proportion identifying as lesbian, gay or bisexual (LGB) increased from 1.6% in 2014 to 2.2% in 2018 (Experimental statistics on sexual orientation in the UK, 2018).
- In 2018, there were an estimated 1.2 million people aged 16 years and over identifying as LGB (Experimental statistics on sexual orientation in the UK, 2018).
- Younger people (aged 16 to 24 years) were most likely to identify as LGB in 2018 (4.4%). (Experimental statistics on sexual orientation in the UK, 2018).
- It is believed that Newcastle has a higher number of LGBT people living in and around the city than other North East areas, partially because of its wide-ranging social scene and regional capital status.

The most recent Government LGBT survey in 2017 indicates that:

- LGBT respondents are less satisfied with their life nowadays than the general UK population (rating satisfaction 6.5 on average out of 10 compared with 7.7). Trans respondents had particularly low scores (around 5.4 out of 10).
- At least two in five respondents had experienced an incident because they were LGBT, such as verbal harassment or physical violence, in the 12 months preceding the survey.
- However, more than nine in ten of the most serious incidents went unreported, often because respondents thought 'it happens all the time'.

In May 2020, The LGBT Foundation published findings from the largest and most substantive research into the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on LGBT communities in the United Kingdom to date. This research uncovered some of the wide-ranging and profound effects the pandemic has had on the lives of LGBT people in areas such as mental health, isolation, substance misuse, eating disorders, living in unsafe environments, financial impact, homelessness, access to healthcare and access to adequate support.

Because of changes through welfare reform, particularly the housing benefit restrictions, young LGBT people may be at greater risk of issues such as homelessness. A single person under the age of 35 is now only able to claim housing benefit for bedsit accommodation or one room in shared accommodation. This could potentially force young LGBT people into homelessness as not all young people are equally able to remain in their parental home, or sufficiently confident to live in shared accommodation where they feel unable to be who they are.

With an ageing population and a high level of limiting health conditions, we also recognise that there are specific issues for older or disabled LGBT people who may need support services, such as care in their own homes. Evidence suggests that people still have serious concerns about revealing their full identity for fear of discrimination and abuse. Many older people say that they hide their sexual orientation at a time when they are most vulnerable.

What are we doing?

We continue to support LGBT young people who are potentially vulnerable to homelessness through commissioned services. As part of the changes, we are making to the way we provide care, we continue to identify ways in which we can raise awareness of people's differing needs, such as through staff training programmes.

We encourage people to report harassment and hate crime for homophobic and transphobic incidents to Stop Hate.

Over the last year, we have continued to work closely with local transgender organisations to raise awareness of the issues that transgender people face daily. We have joined the NHS and other organisations, including the police, education, unions and LGBT groups, to come together to organise a ground-breaking annual conference, aimed at raising awareness and understanding the needs of the local transgender community. This year due to the pandemic the conference took place online and included a video produced by local young people, with over 75 people attending.

MESMAC continues to offer a wide range of services, including advice, guidance, and counselling sessions particularly around health issues to LGBT people of all ages and their friends and families.

Stonewall, a national LGBT charity and campaigning organisation, has recognised us for the work we do to support LGBT people both in the workplace and in the community. In the 2020 Stonewall Workplace Equality Index we have been ranked as the number one employer in the country for our commitment to equality and diversity. We have also been named as a top employer for transgender staff.

Organisers from Northern Pride were awarded the title of UK Pride 2020, but uncertainty over the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic led the celebrations to be postponed until summer 2021. We will continue to invest and support this event.

5. Socio-economic factors

There are several different types of socio-economic inequality. This inequality is influenced partly by geography and economic conditions, but also other factors, such as government policies, access to opportunities, people's background and personal characteristics.

Key facts and figures:

- The latest version of the Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) shows Newcastle's average score among upper tier local authorities for 2019 is 32 out of 151.
- Over a quarter (25.7%) of Newcastle's lower level output areas (small geographical areas) are in the 10% most deprived nationally (IMD, 2019).
- Levels of child poverty in Newcastle continue to be well above the national average – 54,580 dependent children up until the age of 20 (29.1%) live in low-income families, compared with the England average of 19.9% (HM Revenues and Customs, children in low income families local measure, 2014).

People living in deprived areas are more likely to experience ill health, need social care support and lack the means to contribute towards the cost of their care. Prevailing economic conditions, Brexit, the impact of COVID-19 restrictions and the government's tax and benefit reforms and changes to the way councils are funded present a challenging climate in which to tackle inequality. Almost any change to a council service has some socio-economic impact. The nature of our responsibilities and the extent to which more deprived communities and most vulnerable people in the city rely on our services.

The situation will become harder as government makes changes to the way councils are funded. In future, local authorities will have to rely heavily on Council Tax, other income and business rates to sustain services. This will favour affluent parts of the country over poorer areas in the North that have higher levels of need. To mitigate these pressures, we are strengthening Newcastle's growth prospects and we are working to ensure vulnerable people in the city receive the support they need.

5.1 Newcastle and the North East economy

At the start of 2020, Newcastle's labour market was in a relatively strong position, with historically high levels of employment and levels of unemployment that, while still too high, were far below previous levels. Since then however, the city has been severely impacted by the economic impacts of COVID-19 and the measures to contain it.

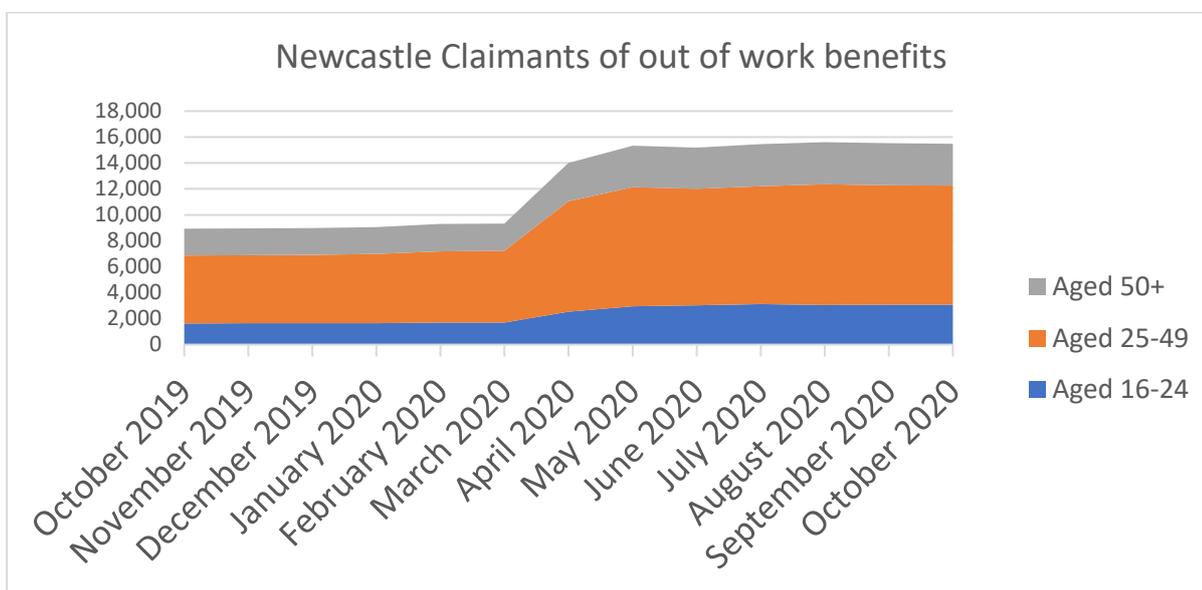
Along with the rest of the UK, and most of the world, we are facing a significant economic challenge due to the impact of COVID-19. Unprecedented government support has been provided through the Job Retention Scheme, known as furlough, which at the end of July was supporting over 39,000 people, 32% of the total eligible workforce. Self-employed people have also been affected, with 7,700 people in the city accessing the government's self-employment income support at that time.

Despite government support, we have seen a very steep rise in unemployment. The North East had the highest rate of any UK region in July to Sept 2020, at 6.7%, an increase of

1.2% since April to June and significantly above the national rate of 4.8%, the North West (4.6%) and Yorkshire (4.7%).

At local level, the out of work benefit claimant count provides a better measure of short-term changes than the official unemployment rate. In February 2020, before we began to feel the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and restrictions to contain it, this stood at 9,305. By October 2020, it stood at 15,485 - an increase of over 66% in just eight months. We know that this impact has fallen on those people and places facing the most disadvantage:

- claimant rates among Newcastle’s 16-24 year olds rose by 82% between February and October 2020;
- our most disadvantaged wards have seen the largest rises in the claimant count; and
- many of the sectors that have been most heavily impacted, such as restaurants, takeaways, small retail and the hospitality sector, employ relatively high numbers of people from black and minority ethnic communities, recent migrants and younger people.



What are we doing?

We are working hard to address these challenges. Building on our long-standing commitment to supporting and growing our city’s business base and providing support to enable residents to develop the skills they need to access work, we have redoubled our support for businesses, employees and job seekers.

Our response to the rise in unemployment is focused on enhancing the Skills Hub service offer. The Skills Hub provides a co-ordinated approach across the main providers of employment support in the city, including Newcastle Futures, the National Careers Service and Connexions. We have secured funding from the North of Tyne Combined Authority to provide an enhanced job matching service through the Skills Hub, branded as Jobs@SkillsHub. This is providing free vacancy advertising for local employers and a job matching service for job seekers. The service provides a single point of access to the range of support offers available through Skills Hub partners – careers advice, job and interview preparation, mental health support, and business start-up advice and support. We are also providing a flexible support fund to meet individual requirements. Currently, the Skills Hub service is all virtual, but we are aiming to reopen for face-to-face support from the City

Library base as soon as safely possible. We have also increased our outreach activity to engage with employers, understand their needs and recruitment plans, and to promote the support that is available.

We are also working with Jobcentre Plus and Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) on the Kickstart scheme, which provides a wage subsidy for six-month work placements for young people. Through the North of Tyne Combined Authority, acting as a representative body for employers with fewer than 30 vacancies, we are considering where we can create Kickstart opportunities within our services and encouraging and supporting other employers to provide Kickstart placements for young people. Alongside this, we are working with DWP and the combined authority to unlock additional funding for services to wrap around Kickstart, to help young people get through this uncertain period with the best possible outcomes.

We are supporting the city's businesses as far as possible to survive through the changing restrictions that have been put in place. During April to July 2020, we administered government COVID-19 grants to businesses impacted by the lockdown restriction. In total, £61.5 million was distributed to around 5,300 Newcastle businesses through the Small Business scheme, Retail business scheme and Discretionary Grants. Further grants were distributed during November and December 2020 period and the latest lockdown, distributing close to £100m of grants to businesses since the start of the pandemic.

Through the Business & IP Centre, we have been remotely delivering support service for business since March 2020. In July 2020, we launched an additional service, Citylife Business Support, to help businesses that have been adversely affected by COVID-19. This provides businesses with access to one-to-one expertise to help develop and adapt their business, recover, and plan for the future. Between July and September 2020, the Business & IP Centre assisted 324 enquiries with 216 expert sessions and ran six specialist advice webinars.

Alongside these responses, we have continued to remotely provide support to people seeking work, through Newcastle Futures and via community projects supported through a community-led local development programme.

Looking to the future, we are developing plans to support the economic and social recovery of the city through the recently created City Futures Board, which enables us to come together with our partners to plan for renewal, including promoting an inclusive and low carbon path for the city's economy.

5.2 Promoting financial inclusion and homelessness prevention

To help mitigate poverty and the risk of homelessness the Active Inclusion Newcastle partnership approach was developed in 2013. This provides a framework to make prevention everyone's business by proactively coordinating advice and support to prevent the risk of homelessness and financial exclusion. We do this by maximising the value of our collective resources to help residents maintain the foundations for a stable life: somewhere to live, an income, financial inclusion, and employment opportunities.

The Active Inclusion multi-disciplinary team, which is made up of Welfare Rights, Money Matters YHN, Jobcentre Plus and Early Help workers, delivers integrated casework for residents where existing more silo based services can't provide cross cutting support.

In 2019-20 the Active Inclusion partnership:

- Prevented 3,745 cases of homelessness.
- Supported 23,198 households gain £28,991,470 in unclaimed benefits, and 3,853 residents to write off £1,365,510 in problematic debt
- Supported 620 households remain in the community through the Supporting Independence Scheme.
- Provided free face-to-face and online training to help make financial inclusion and homelessness prevention everyone's business - 457 staff and volunteers completed the Introduction to Benefits, Preventing Benefit Sanctions and Universal Credit training and 194 staff and volunteers have completed the Introduction to Budgeting training.
- Support reduced rent arrears from an average of £504.44 to £98.77 thereby reducing the risk of eviction.

In July 2019, Cabinet agreed to a Corporate Debt Review, to create a more consistent and fair approach towards income, expenditure and debt management helping us more fairly and more effectively respond to the growth in Council Tax and rent arrears of over £3 million. This helps us move from a culture of collection from residents to connection with residents and built on our supportive rather than punitive approach which saw Your Homes Newcastle evictions decrease by 75% since 2008.

We also use discretionary housing payments to help support people to stay in their own homes. Discretionary housing payments are provided as short-term funding to help residents pay their rent, either by maximising their benefit entitlement, budgeting, working to increase their income or moving to more affordable accommodation. Discretionary housing payments are an additional payment to help people who claim housing benefit or the housing costs element of Universal Credit and are struggling to pay their rent. In 2020-21 we received £1,091,422 in discretionary housing payments funding, an increase from £94,326 in 2019-20. Increasingly, we are using this funding to mitigate the impact of some welfare benefit reforms including reductions in benefits due to the bedroom tax, the lower benefit cap, or for those who find themselves in severe hardship.

The government's programme of welfare reforms continues to have a detrimental effect on residents. In Newcastle it is estimated that there will be £120 million of annual cuts to working-age benefits by the end of 2024-25 since 2010. The COVID-19 pandemic has created additional financial pressures for households that were already struggling to make ends meet.

The temporary measures introduced by government, such as a £20 per week uplift in Universal Credit and Working Tax Credit benefits, income protection schemes, suspension of evictions, furlough schemes and mortgage / credit repayment holidays, have helped to mitigate some of the impact for residents.

However, when measures end, we are likely to experience a demand for trusted money and housing related advice and support. Advice and support during the pandemic have largely been replaced with telephone and online service. The risk that residents choose not to engage with advice and support until problems reach crisis point is ongoing, particularly as it can result in emotional upheaval for residents and additional financial costs to the local authority.

During the first lockdown, Newcastle saw an 82% reduction in people found sleeping rough. 130 people were found on 348 instances between 30 March and 1 November 2020, compared with 222 people found on 1,909 instances from 25 August 2019 to 29 March 2020). This reduction was achieved for two key reasons:

- Firstly, and most importantly, our specialist homelessness accommodation remained open during lockdown, allowing a safe and suitable place for people who were homeless. This was only possible due to the commitment and responsiveness of our partners, and the heroic efforts of frontline staff working in those accommodation projects.
- Secondly, our partnership arrangements with our rough sleeping coordinator, Housing Advice Centre, Changing Lives' multiple exclusion team, and the police have allowed us to coordinate more personalised responses for each individual person sleeping rough.

Crisis, the national charity for homeless people, has delivered services in Newcastle since 2007. On 20 June 2019, we entered a partnership with Crisis based on a shared commitment to work together to end homelessness in the city. Newcastle already has a relatively good record of preventing and relieving homelessness. Through this partnership, Crisis will expand its investment in Newcastle, bringing additional resource to the city, which will help to build on Newcastle's good work, make responding to homelessness everyone's business, and further strengthen Newcastle's system. This will help to enable the city to make the brave and ambitious transition to ending homelessness altogether.

5.3 Council Tax

The government has assumed that councils will raise Council Tax and apply the adult social care precept to make up for social care funding shortages. Newcastle, like other councils across the country, will need to raise Council Tax.

By 2021, we will have less to spend per household than the average across England as a whole. The combined impact of the proposed 1.949% increase in Council Tax and 3% adult social care precept will be adding £84.54 to the annual bill for a Band D property and £56.36 for Band A. We will use the income generated to avoid the need to make further reductions to services than those set out within our medium-term plan. The increase we have proposed is below the level that is defined as excessive by the Secretary of State.

The government has also introduced changes to the long-term empty property premium, and we propose to increase this. This change for 2021-22 will mean that properties that have remained empty for ten years will be charged 300% of Council Tax. By doing this it is hoped that owners and landlords are encouraged to bring their properties back into use.

In supporting care leavers up to the age of 25, we will continue to offer a discretionary hardship payment to meet their Council Tax liability for a full year.

People who have reached pension age on 1 April 2020 are now considered for Council Tax reduction based on the government's national scheme and assessed on 100% of their Council Tax. This means the impact falls disproportionately on working-age people and the amount charged is determined by each council under their local scheme.

We recognise that some of these changes may be disproportionately affected by certain groups of people. However, we will continue to help and support those most in need by

providing the Council Tax reduction scheme and continue to signpost people to the debt management and advice services. Individuals experiencing severe financial difficulties and are unable to pay their Council Tax can also apply for support through our Council Tax hardship scheme.

In 2020-21, in addition to our hardship scheme, the government provided funding for Council Tax hardship for those receiving Council Tax reduction. This was automatically passed to residents, meaning that over 16,000 households had no Council Tax to pay and a further 14,000 households had their bill reduced by at least £150. In the provisional Local Government Finance Settlement announced in December 2020, the Chancellor announced a further one-off grant for 2021-22 of £670 million nationally, to help local authorities manage the additional Council Tax reduction costs as a result of the pandemic. We will use this to continue our Council Tax hardship schemes, increasing the award to up to £160.

5.4 Digital access to services

Supporting people to develop the confidence and skills to access digital services is a key element of our commitment to tackling inequality and ensuring that everyone can benefit from their everyday use. Digital channels enable residents to contact us at a time and place convenient for them and improve our efficiency. However, we recognise that digital services may not be suitable for all and that some residents will continue to require face-to-face support in accessing our services.

Access to computers has been severely impacted by the national response to COVID-19. From 18 March 2020 until 22 July 2020, it was not possible to provide access to PCs or digital support sessions face-to-face as libraries were closed. Whilst our libraries were COVID secure when they reopened in July 2020, it was not possible to offer face-to-face support in group sessions. However, PC access was restored and limited one-to-one support could be provided from a distance. Once the second lockdown came into effect in November 2020 it was, on advice from Public Health, agreed that access to PCs should not be provided.

Throughout the pandemic, we have continued to provide support via email and social media where possible. We have increased our digital content, including eBooks and eAudiobooks and made it possible for people to get an automatic membership by applying online.

When we come out of lockdown, libraries will have a key role to play in helping communities to recover through supporting employment, digital skills, tackling loneliness, education and cultural activities. This will require us to continue our strong partnership with Your Homes Newcastle and build new partnerships across communities in the city.

6. Our communities

Newcastle continues to be one of the safest large cities in the UK but like the national picture, there have been increases locally in recorded crime over the last few years. While there has been an increase in certain types of crime, other rises can be linked to improvements in crime recording and victim confidence to report crimes to the police. Despite this, in the twelve months up to the end of March 2020, the Safer Communities Survey indicates that 95% of people in Newcastle “feel very or fairly safe living in their neighbourhood.”

There is no longer any government funding for local authority community safety programmes. This means that our Safe Newcastle services are maintained at statutory minimum level and includes the prevention and reduction of crime and anti-social behaviour, reduction of substance use and reoffending, safeguarding to tackle extremism and undertaking Domestic Homicide Reviews. However, as a local authority we are committed to going beyond our statutory duty to meet the needs of local people. We commission Stop Hate UK to provide a third-party hate crime reporting service for Newcastle residents to offer alternatives for those victims who are not comfortable reporting incidents to the police or other authorities.

Through income generation and partnership working, we continue to maintain public space CCTV, work to tackle hate crime and prevent domestic violence and abuse. However, there will be an impact on the level of support we are able to provide for Safe Neighbourhoods work to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour in all wards of the city. To minimise the impact of this, we have secured funding for additional staff to support the continued delivery of Safe Neighbourhoods work in areas where there are Your Homes Newcastle tenants.

Our Domestic Violence Champions network continues to build across the city. We have just over 100 champions who act as single points of contact within their organisation or place of work for service users, colleagues, and / or managers seeking advice and guidance on supporting victims of domestic abuse. A weekly newsletter goes out to all champions and a wide range of partners across the community, voluntary and statutory services. This newsletter provides up to date information and guidance across a range of violence against women and girls themes and is a useful tool not only to keep our champions knowledge up to date, but it also services a way to continue their engagement with the Network.

We recognise how important it is for people to feel safe in their neighbourhoods and to have trust and confidence in local services. To support this, we continue to provide a range of regulatory services and environmental services, responding to complaints about noise, littering, dog fouling, fly-tipping, vandalism and graffiti.

We continue to work with partners including for example the Youth Offending Team, schools, community groups and police to tackle issues and reduce community tensions when they surface.

7. Environmental impacts and climate change

Our last medium-term plan set out a bold ambition to transition to net zero by 2030. We have made significant progress in this ambition, reducing the council's own CO2 emissions by a further 4.8% between April 2019 and 2020, following a reduction of 41% between 2010 and 2019, and in September 2020 launched our Net Zero Newcastle – 2030 Action Plan.

The Net Zero Newcastle – 2030 Action Plan sets out over 150 actions that the city can take to decarbonise over the next decade while taking advantage of the huge opportunities for green growth in the local economy. The two main areas targeted in the plan are energy use in homes and non-domestic properties, which accounts for 64% of the city's emissions, and transport, which is just under 30%.

While many of the actions set out in the Net Zero Newcastle – 2030 Action Plan need to be taken by national government, we remain committed to progressing action locally on a number of priorities, often supported by match-funding from other sources, and leveraging in further funding from the private sector.

As part of the medium-term plan, we will release £2 million from our Housing Reserve as the need for this has been mitigated through our success in securing funds from the North of Tyne Combined Authority's Brownfield Housing Fund. £1 million of this one-off funding will be allocated to underpin the Net Zero Newcastle – 2030 Action Plan and support any match funding for the £300 million of Government and other funding we are applying for. This includes educating young people and communities about tackling climate change, developing low carbon heat networks and neighbourhoods and implementing projects such as Newcastle GREEN, thermal imaging of the city, public sector building retrofit and carrying out energy audits.

8. Wellbeing and health

Key facts and figures:

- The health of people in Newcastle upon Tyne is generally worse than the England average. Newcastle upon Tyne is one of the 20% most deprived districts/unitary authorities in England and about 24.7% (11,835) children live in low income families. (Index of Multiple Deprivation, 2019).
- Life expectancy for both men and women is lower than the England average. Life expectancy is 13.1 years lower for men and 8.8 years lower for women in the most deprived areas of Newcastle upon Tyne than in the least deprived areas (ONS, life expectancy in the UK: 2017 to 2019).
- Under 75 mortality rates from cardiovascular diseases, all cancers, liver disease, respiratory disease and stroke are worse than the England average. However, rates have declined and started to stabilise for under 75 mortality rates for cardiovascular diseases and heart disease
- We have seen a decline in lung cancer and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease mortality over recent years.
- There has been an increase in drug misuse related deaths over recent years

What are we doing?

Over the past year, COVID-19 has created an unprecedented public health challenge for our communities, as with all others around the world. We have responded as a public health organisation in our united response by understanding the close links of the health, social and economic impacts on our residents, businesses, educational settings and services.

In addition to this, we are realigning the way we tackle obesity within the city. We know that obesity is an increasing problem in Newcastle, for adults and children. It damages both people's physical and mental health. We want to help people be as healthy as possible and as a result change from focussing on people's behaviour, to tackling the structural causes of these problems, for example, how people's environment affects their diet and opportunities to be physically active. We also want to ensure that we work with groups of people at increased risk of inactivity and poor diets such as people with mental health issues and those with long-term health conditions.

Our focus over the past year has been dealing with the immediate and long-term effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. We developed the Newcastle COVID Control plan, overseen by the City Futures Board in their role as local outbreak control engagement board.

Below this, we have also set up our COVID Control Group with multiagency partners from the NHS Trusts, Clinical Commissioning Group and Northumbria Police. This group meets twice a week to allow partners to review data, share intelligence on cases, outbreaks and behaviours, discuss policy updates and implications in order to provide assurance and agree actions.

Working with voluntary sector and the National Innovation Centre for Data partners, we established CityLife Line to coordinate and provide support for people who could not access

food, medicines, or essential household items, or those in need of wellbeing support. CityLife Line harnessed the collective efforts of more than 200 organisations and 1,500 offers of volunteer support.

We have embedded this in our welfare and wellbeing team, which is primarily focused on supporting people self-isolating to ensure they are able to continue to follow guidance. Since September 2020, the service has supported 587 individuals through referrals to our specialist financial teams and 166 have been supported by a food parcel either directly from us or from the voluntary and community sector. In Newcastle 10,635 residents are identified as clinically extremely vulnerable, meaning they are at the highest risk of severe outcomes of COVID-19 and are advised to shield. During the second national lockdown in November 2020, we sent letters to offer support and trained teams to deal with the requests for support. In partnership with Healthworks Newcastle, we also delivered calls to all of the people that registered on the National Shielding Support Service, supported by our own teams making welfare phone calls to all adults on the clinically extremely vulnerable list.

Urgent support needs are met by the welfare and wellbeing team and ongoing support is provided through the voluntary and community sector. We have also mobilised a small number of the 'Toon Army' volunteers, who supported us during the first national lockdown, to assist with shopping and befriending requests.

9. Impacts on our workforce

As one of the largest employers in the city, we have championed job quality, opportunity, and fair pay through our sustained commitment to the Newcastle Living Wage. We committed to the Living Wage rate in May 2011 and following the work of an independent Fairness Commission, we introduced the Newcastle Living Wage in November 2012. Since that date, we have reviewed the Newcastle Living Wage rate by tracking and adopting the Foundation Living Wage rate which is announced by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation each November.

We have had very little impacts on our workforce due to budget reductions over the last few years. In addition to this we have met our commitment to having no workforce impacts as a result of our in-year management action to address the financial impact of COVID on our own finances.

As part of our commitment to equality we will continue to look at how we monitor any future workforce reductions. In addition, reduced budgets mean there continue to be limited recruitment activity. We will continue to apply our equalities policies and procedures to both redundancy and recruitment processes to demonstrate fairness.

Recently we carried out a survey with all staff to ask them how they felt we had dealt with the Coronavirus pandemic as an employer. The result was overwhelmingly positive with an average score 7.6 out of 10 across all questions. We will continue this engagement activity, and over the next 6 months we plan to undertake a series of survey activities with all staff to understand how inclusive we are as an employer. In addition to this we have provided extra support, advice, and guidance in relation to COVID-19 to our BAME staff.

10. Next Steps – ongoing review of cumulative impact assessment

Feedback received during consultation and during implementation will continue to inform our proposals. Working with residents and our partners, we will explore and monitor the cumulative impacts that emerge as our proposals are implemented. This information will be used to help us develop and shape mitigation initiatives and to inform future decisions going forward.

Annex 1 – Summary of impacts

| IIA | Disability | Sex | Age | Marriage/civil partnership | Pregnancy and maternity | Race and ethnicity | Religion and belief | Sexual Orientation | Gender Reassignment | Other impacts |
|--|------------|-----|-----------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|--------------------|---------------------|--|
| Adult Social Care – Financial Management | | | Older people | | | | | | | |
| Adult Social Care - Supported Housing Options for people with a learning disability, Autism, or both | | | Older people | | | | | | | Climate change Carers |
| Children’s Social Care - Keeping families safely together | | | Children/young people | | | | | | | People vulnerable to socio economic influences Geography Community safety Public Health |
| Children’s Social Care - In-House Residential | | | Children/young people | | | | | | | People vulnerable to socio economic Influences Businesses Geography Community safety Public Health |

| IIA | Disability | Sex | Age | Marriage/civil partnership | Pregnancy and maternity | Race and ethnicity | Religion and belief | Sexual Orientation | Gender Reassignment | Other impacts |
|--|-------------------|------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|---------------------|---|
| Public Health whole systems approach on healthy weight and obesity | Potential benefit | Potential impact | Both potential impact & benefit | No impact | Potential benefit | Both potential impact & benefit | No impact | No impact | Potential impact | People vulnerable to socio economic influences Businesses Public Health Climate Change |
| Council Tax and adult social care precept | Potential impact | women | Younger and older people | Potential impact | Potential impact | Both potential impact & benefit | Potential impact | Potential impact | Potential impact | Geography Community Cohesion Public health Carers |

Key:

- Actual impact
- Potential impact
- No impact
- Potential benefit
- Both potential impact & benefit

Please note the table shows indicative impacts prior to mitigation. The use of temporary funding and additional measures has mitigated or negated potential disadvantage for people with protected characteristics wherever possible and should be read in conjunction with the full cumulative impact assessment to contextualise initial findings.