

Council Plan 2022-2025

DRAFT



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Foreword



The COVID-19 pandemic was unprecedented in the scale of challenge it presented to the city, to the lives of the people of Newcastle, and to the services that we provide.

But it was a challenge that the city rose to, with the council leading the way – tackling the devastating effects of the virus on our residents, our communities and our businesses. The council quickly adapted our work to serve the people of Newcastle to ensure that the most vulnerable in our city were protected, that vital frontline services continued, that business grants were quickly distributed to protect jobs and livelihoods and that organisations across the city worked together to lead a successful whole-city approach.

As we move into recovery and renewal of our great city, it is important that the council helps to shape a clear path and sets out how we as an organisation will contribute to recovery, building on what we have learned throughout the pandemic.

There are certainly many challenges ahead, including the social and health inequalities that the pandemic exposed, and in some cases amplified, as well as the financial impact on the council with further savings to make. But there are also many opportunities to rethink how we deliver our services to best meet the needs of our residents and to build forward better.

Our ambitions for our great city remain and we are determined to deliver the best possible outcomes. This council plan sets out how we will contribute to the city's recovery and renewal from COVID-19, to the benefit of everyone who live and works here.

It sets out how the council will move forward with our plans to meet our own Net Zero ambitions, to make life more local with a strong emphasis on neighbourhoods, and to clean up the air we breathe and improve the environment. It shows how the council will continue to protect adults' and children's services, welfare rights and homelessness support. As a council we remain focussed on supporting the building of thousands of new homes, attracting new businesses and jobs and making our city a healthier place to live and work.

We do not work alone, and we will build on the success of our collaboration with partners and agencies across the city to ensure that the ways of working we have put in place through the pandemic are strengthened.

This plan sets out the clear ambition of the council to ensure that Newcastle remains a strong, inclusive, fair, proud and ambitious city, and to build forward better from the pandemic.

Deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor Karen Kilgour

Purpose of this plan

This Council Plan sets out how we as a council will:

- Work towards our political priorities for the city
- Support the city's commitment to renewal
- Continue to deliver essential services while dealing with the financial challenges facing local government

The plan sets the strategic direction for what we will do and our areas of focus over the next three years to 2025. It is the principal plan within our overall planning and delivery framework, which then informs our medium-term financial plan, and others.

It will help us to:

- Plan and deliver services
- Shape our financial planning
- Show our staff how their roles make a difference to the city
- Show our partners how we contribute to citywide priorities and renewal

The council has a range of strategic plans which will continue to be driven and informed by the priorities set out within the Council Plan, including our Local Plan, and partnership plans such as those for Collaborative Newcastle and Safe Newcastle.



Our medium-term financial plan for 2022-2025 sets out how our services will deliver the priorities outlined in this Council Plan, how we will use and invest our resources, and the changes we need to make to ensure we work within a balanced budget. This will be updated and published each year for consultation.

We will communicate our Council Plan with our staff, residents, businesses and partners using the most appropriate channels for different audiences, and we will review the plan each year to reflect on how circumstances might have an impact on our approach.

What the city looks like today

While the coronavirus pandemic has had a profound impact on our city and our communities, Newcastle remains a strong, inclusive, fair, proud and ambitious city.

We continue to act as a magnet for people, businesses and investment who recognise our unique blend of a thriving, busy city which still feels local and personal, with a great choice of housing, leisure and lifestyle facilities and opportunities second to none.

We continue to generate new jobs in a wide range of sectors, including the growing green economy, drive innovation and support new businesses to come and join us in the city. We continue to be the home of cultural and creative industries in the North East, a centre for the arts and host for major sporting and cultural events.

And our community spirit, the Geordie spirit, expressed in the way in which our communities and neighbourhoods rallied round each other and supported one another during this time of crisis has been more remarkable than ever. The people of our great city pulled together, volunteering through our CityLife Line to support the vulnerable, and looking out for one another in so many ways. That sense of community, of neighbourliness, is a distinctive part of our city which we cherish.

Inevitably, the impact of COVID-19 on the city has shaped and influenced many of the priorities we have set out. In many cases, it has exacerbated existing issues. In some areas, new issues have emerged which we now need to tackle to make our city the place we all want it to be.

We are a growing city: Approximately 300,820 people live in Newcastle, compared to 289,800 in 2014 (ONS estimates, 2019)

We are a diverse city: The population is split almost 50/50 between men and women, around a fifth have a disability that limits their day-to-day life and about a tenth are Black, Asian or from an ethnic minority – this rises to almost a quarter in school-age children. Nearly 50,000 students are enrolled at our universities

We are a city with areas of significant deprivation: Newcastle became relatively more deprived between 2015 and 2019 and almost a third of our pupils claim a free school meal

We are a working city: In 2019, there were 8,190 businesses in the city and 70% of the working-age population were employed – up from 65% in 2014

We have a variety of housing options: Newcastle has approximately 137,100 residential properties. There are a higher proportion of flats and a lower proportion of detached properties compared to England and Wales. 38% homes are owner occupied, 37% are privately rented and 25% are social housing.

We are committed to climate change: We have declared a Climate Emergency.

We are a responsive and supportive city: Over 200 voluntary organisations registered to respond to requests for support at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic and the council alone received over 1,500 offers of support from volunteers. We worked closely with NE1 and NewcastleGateshead Initiative to support local businesses and distributed nearly £100 million of grant funding.

Our vision and priorities for Newcastle

Our vision

Newcastle is already a great place to be born, a great place to grow up, a great place to work and a great place to live. It is a distinctive city – driven by the warmth of its welcome and the people who live and work here.

By 2030, we want to be the exemplar of a post-industrial city that has mitigated its greenhouse gas emissions and adapted to climate change, delivering net zero. We will attract and grow our own talent, expanding our business base and jobs in the 'new' economy - particularly the green economy - through innovation, reskilling, and encouraging locally-rooted companies with sound employment practises which contribute significant economic and social benefit.

We all deserve to be part of thriving communities where the people, places and things around us enable us to do the things we want to in life. We will tackle poverty, improve wellbeing and health, and challenge social and health inequalities in our communities and neighbourhoods - including building an inclusive city where all feel welcome and working to achieve zero poverty and zero inequality. We will ensure Newcastle is a great place to live with clean, green and safe communities.

Rich in culture and heritage, and using that richness to represent the city's distinctive nature on the world stage, we are the engine room of the North of Tyne and the North East, and a world class city right here in the North of England.

The role of the council is unique in supporting the delivery of this vision. In many areas we contribute directly to it – making our neighbourhoods safer, cleaner and greener, supporting communities, encouraging entrepreneurship and education, to name just a few. But we also play a unique role in the city in convening partners, mobilising action and developing support for our collective vision for the city.

Our priorities

We have five themed priorities which focus our efforts and resources. These are broadly consistent with the focus of the Labour administration in recent years and were restated in May 2021 within the Newcastle Labour 2021 manifesto: A Proud Record. A Fairer Future. They are:

- Creating more and better jobs: Employment
- The best learning opportunities for all: Education and skills
- A healthy, caring city: Health and social care
- More and better homes: Housing
- A clean, green and safe city: The environment

Creating more and better jobs: Employment

Everyone in our city deserves to have good quality, secure, well-paid jobs. We will continue to work to make Newcastle a full-employment city, where everyone has the opportunity to achieve their aspiration.

We will:

- Help development of skills and training to promote new job opportunities from our work in tackling the Climate Emergency
- Work towards becoming a foundation living wage city
- Campaign for decent sick pay and good working conditions
- Tackle the scourge of modern slavery
- Continue to work with businesses to minimise job losses from the COVID-19 crisis and stand up for businesses in those sectors most affected
- Explore the possibility of the council taking on more apprentices and work placements to give more opportunities to the young people who have lost out because of COVID-19

The best learning opportunities for all: Education and skills

Every child deserves the best start in life. We will support the expansion of schools and the creation of new schools to provide enough child school places.

We will:

- Continue working towards being a child-friendly city, making our city centre a child-centred space and listening to children and young people through Corporate Parenting and Newcastle Youth Council [this is now being addressed through our No Child Left Behind approach]
- Extend education bursaries to help children from disadvantaged backgrounds stay on in education
- Support the expansion of schools and the creation of new schools to provide enough school places
- Build on our relationship with the Promise Board to address exclusions and attendance
- Launch Children and Families Newcastle, a service which will work with children and families to ensure they get earlier, community-based support that tackles inequalities and supports children to thrive [this was launched in August 2021]
- Campaign about the impact of poverty on children and families in our city and do everything we can to alleviate poverty for children and young people
- Invest further in education, skills and training with partners, to ensure we have a flexible, skilled workforce that responds to new jobs in the green economy
- Involve children, young people and students in initiatives that help them contribute to delivery of a Net Zero Newcastle

A healthy, caring city: Health and social care

We continue to support people to live as independently in their own homes for as long as possible, and to provide a range of alternatives for if or when that is no longer the most appropriate option.

We will:

- Deliver more specialist housing options to help people live as independently as they are able to with the right support in place, in their own communities
- Continue to develop Newcastle as a dementia-friendly city and autism-friendly city
- Expand the Health and Social Care Academy to cover other areas of care provision
- Campaign for better recognition of carers
- Represent the UK in the WHO Healthy Cities political committee
- Work closely with the NHS to care for the most vulnerable in our communities
- Lobby government for a long-term funding solution to the social care crisis and seek parity of esteem between health and social care sectors
- Develop our Collaborative Newcastle micro communities approach to further localise health and care and put communities in charge of designing the care they need [this is now being addressed through our Newcastle Neighbourhoods approach]
- Promote independence in the community as a principle of our approach to care services
-

More and better homes: Housing

Everyone deserves to be able to live in a decent home. We are taking decisive action to improve homes for council and private tenants alike. We have ambitious plans as a council to build more homes to tackle the housing shortage, as well as facilitating the building of more homes in the city through our Local Plan.

We will:

- Ensure a constant five-year supply of land needed to continue to build the homes that Newcastle needs to accommodate future generations, while lobbying government to stop the imposition of centrally driven targets
- Prioritise brownfield sites for new housing development wherever possible and look at how we can develop more housing in the city centre to encourage a wider range of uses in the city centre
- Campaign for rent holidays for people struggling financially as a result of the COVID-19 crisis
- Work towards net zero new homes standards and explore new technologies to retrofit existing homes with carbon reducing schemes, such as ground and air source heat pumps
- Deal with rogue private sector landlords by requiring them to take responsibility for antisocial behaviour committed by tenants

- Prevent inappropriate office conversions into flats
- Continue to crack down on antisocial behaviour to ensure that no resident feels uncomfortable or at risk in their homes or in our neighbourhoods
- Develop our work to support the White Ribbon campaign to tackle domestic abuse
- Resist the clustering of housing of vulnerable people into areas of the city where resources and capacity are already strained
- Increase the voice of tenants, especially in the private rented sector
- Build on our award-winning work on inclusion by exploring the introduction of a 'human rights'-based approach to tackling homelessness

A clean, green and safe city: The environment

Protecting the environment and dealing with the climate change emergency is an absolute priority. We will make Newcastle net zero by 2030. We have kept our parks open, increased recycling rates and worked with the police to reduce crime and antisocial behaviour.

We will:

- Work with residents, businesses and public sector partners to decarbonise our economy and create a whole new generation of green industry jobs
- Take decisive action to tackle poor air quality, including introducing a Clean Air Zone in areas most affected by poor air quality
- Pedestrianise more areas of the city centre, improve and extend bus priority lanes across the city and campaign for cheaper bus fares
- Introduce Play Streets, low traffic neighbourhoods and School Street pilots
- Continue to lobby government for greater investment in public transport, including integrated smart ticketing, despite government clawing back funds to enable this work, and for local authorities to have more control over public transport provision in their area
- Seek funding to introduce more electric vehicle charging points across Newcastle, with the aim of having the most comprehensive charging network of any UK city
- Review the city's approach to waste management, focusing on re-use, increasing recycling and reducing the amount of waste sent to landfill
- Extend our commitment to biodiversity by installing bee-friendly roofs on bus shelters and other appropriate locations, introducing wildflower verges and other spaces and supporting wildlife habitats and corridors
- Ensure planning for our city's economic renewal and our Net Zero Newcastle Action Plan reflect the importance of biodiversity in the city and plans to protect it further

Our focus for the next three years

Underpinning the priorities laid out above are four specific areas of focus for the coming three years which will drive our more detailed service and financial planning:

- Working better for all our neighbourhoods
- Delivering our net zero ambitions

- The future of the city
- Civic pride and celebrating our diversity

Our medium-term financial plan for this period will set out how our services will deliver the priorities outlined within this Council Plan, how we will use and invest our resources and the changes we need to make to ensure we work within a balanced budget.

Working better for all our neighbourhoods

The role of our neighbourhoods and communities in supporting residents through the pandemic, especially during lockdowns, has been vital to the city's health and wellbeing. The presence of services 'on the ground' and working in partnership has been essential to this – including local services and waste, Your Homes Newcastle, and health and care services working in communities and people's homes.

We will build on this vibrant community capital and work towards making neighbourhoods the default for delivery. Taking this approach to how we plan and deliver services will aim to improve the quality of life in our neighbourhoods in every way - from health to wealth to wellbeing.

A neighbourhood approach does not mean a 'one size fits all' approach. A careful, geographic approach to investment is required, whether this is capital investment in play equipment, pot holes, paving and structures. Or revenue investment in resources to manage grass, grounds, strimming, litter, fly tipping and antisocial behaviour. Or this could be how we deploy our care services most effectively alongside community support.

We will increase our service engagement within neighbourhoods, including important services such as social care and early help. Using our Children and Families Newcastle approach, we will put a range of resources right at the heart of communities. We will improve the ability of residents to do more in their own neighbourhoods, rather than needing to travel elsewhere.

We will also increase people's sense of ownership of their communal space, so that people in those communities feel empowered to make things better for themselves, their families and their neighbours. We recognise that shared space - its cleanliness, degree and perception of safety, its design, the types of businesses and nature of usage - have important effects on participation and behaviour. We will work to understand and respond to these characteristics and help neighbourhoods to be the best places they can be.

We also recognise that we need to keep listening to our communities as we shift our approach, understanding what is working well and where we can improve. We will hold a series of Cabinet meetings in neighbourhoods between October 2021 and March 2022 which will give residents and other stakeholders the opportunity to talk about our political priorities. And we will continue to support our Community Champions Programme and use our resources to engage with communities and neighbourhoods too.

Delivering our net zero ambitions

We have led the way on net zero following our declaration of a climate emergency in 2019. In 2020, we published our Net Zero Newcastle: 2030 Action Plan, which makes over 100 commitments to enable us to be net zero by 2030. You can read the plan in detail on our website: <https://www.newcastle.gov.uk/our-city/climate-change-newcastle/net-zero-newcastle-2030-action-plan>

We have already reduced our carbon emissions by 14.1% from 2019/20, which represents a 52.2% reduction since 2009/10. We were successful in securing over £35 million of funding to support the decarbonisation of the wider public estate, including schools. We also secured over £500,000 to implement the North East Community Forest programme, which will sit alongside our own programme of new tree planting across all neighbourhoods in the city.

Reaching net zero is a clear and important part of our decision-making processes and how we plan and deliver services, with all of our services committed to reducing emissions in service delivery. Net zero will be integral to our approach to the development of our next Local Plan.

Our leadership of the net zero agenda has stimulated support from partners, as well as engaging all parts of the city in the cause. Newcastle upon Tyne Hospital Trust was the first healthcare trust in the UK to declare a climate emergency and our universities and college have committed to significant net zero ambitions. A programme of climate summits will be rolled out over the next 12 months, generating support and tangible commitments from residents, including children and young people, and businesses. Our leadership on this agenda is encouraging the city to move further, and quicker.

The future of the city

Zero carbon is essential to the future of the city, as well as the planet. But we know that we face equally immediate issues in ensuring that our city is the best place for all our residents to be born, to grow up, to live, work, play and grow old.

We are working hard to ensure children and young people are not set back by the experience of the pandemic, particularly with the disruption to teaching and their social interactions with others. Our £500,000 No Child Left Behind programme is rolling out across the city to do this, alongside more long-term work to ensure the right pathways are in place for all children and young people to progress and develop a fulfilling career in whatever sector they choose.

The future of the city is not just about young people. We want to be seen as a place where ageing is active, done in dignity and productively with our residents enjoying good health for longer. People with care and support needs are supported by services closer to them in their own community, which are more personalised and preventative in nature. We work closely with service users, their families, communities and our partners to develop new care collaborative models which are based in neighbourhoods and focused on prevention. Newcastle is also home to the

UK's National Innovation Centre for Ageing, whose globally renowned research is used to inform our service plans.

Civic pride and celebrating our diversity

The warmth of our welcome and our strong community spirit are things that people in and outside the city know and cherish. They have been fundamental in helping the city through these most challenging of times.

We need to do more to celebrate what we are doing and the impact it is having on our residents, our neighbourhoods and our city. Not simply for the sake of doing so, but because celebrating and sharing our good work develops pride in the city - a greater sense that Newcastle is a good place to be. That in turn encourages greater participation in the life of the city and a greater ownership of the things that make the city what it is: our green spaces, our support for residents, our opportunities to have a great career, our diverse communities and neighbourhoods.

Supporting city renewal

Over the last 18 months, our city has faced a challenge like no other in our history. The strength of our communities, our partnerships, our services, has been hugely tested, and the council's role in keeping our city safe has never been more important.

While no-one is complacent, we have now started to look beyond responding to COVID-19, and on to the renewal of the city post-COVID. Considerable work has been taking place with partners, communities and businesses to understand what we collectively need to do to deliver on a citywide vision and commitment to renewal.

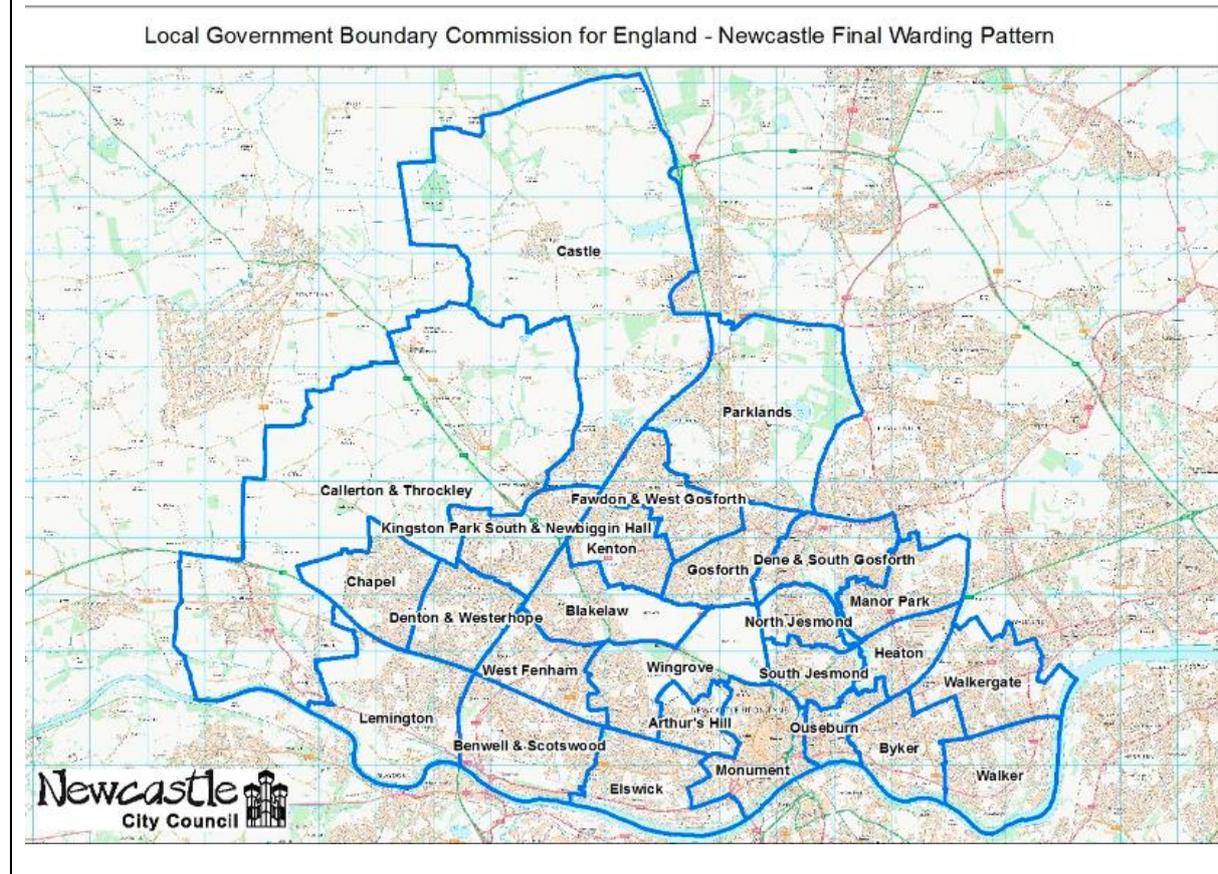
Our role in the renewal of the city is twofold. We deliver a range of services which are fundamental to renewal, many of which this plan features. But more than that, we act as the convener of partnerships for our city, bringing partners together, and communities together, to plan and deliver change.

Running through this plan are actions which demonstrate how the council is playing its part in the renewal of our great city. More information on the commitment partners are making will be published by the City Futures Board, our city partnership board incorporating our Wellbeing for Life Board, in November.

Our Council

The council is composed of 78 councillors – these councillors are elected to represent each of the 26 electoral wards in Newcastle.

Electoral wards are the geographic areas used to elect local government (council) councillors. The Local Government Boundary Commission for England designs the pattern of electoral wards to ensure there are roughly the same number of voters per councillor and to support effective and convenient local government.



Councillors have a duty to the whole community, not just those who voted for them. All councillors meet together at the City Council where they decide the council's overall policies and set the budget each year – it is the public forum for debating key issues facing the city. It appoints the Leader of the Council and holds them to account and appoints the membership of regulatory, advisory and scrutiny committees.

More information about our elected councillors can be found on our website at: <https://newcastle.gov.uk/local-government/your-elected-representatives/local-councillors>

The Leader and Cabinet

The **Leader of the Council** appoints a **Cabinet** who is responsible for the most strategic decisions in line with the council's overall policies and budget. They lead on the political priorities agreed by the ruling group on the council and set out their vision for how they want the council to work. The Cabinet works very closely with council officers to ensure that the organisation delivers their political ambitions and makes a difference to the lives and prospects of local people.

More information about our Cabinet can be found on our website at:

<https://www.newcastle.gov.uk/local-government/your-elected-representatives/leader-and-cabinet>

Our senior officer team

The **Chief Executive and Directors** are our most senior officers. They are responsible for the day-to-day leadership and management of our services and are accountable for delivering the priorities set out within this plan. They work very closely with Cabinet to ensure that the organisation understands and responds to the direction and leadership set out.

More information about our Directors Team can be found on our website at:

<https://newcastle.gov.uk/local-government/chief-executive-and-directors>

Our workforce, our values - fit for the future

We employ nearly 5,500 staff across our services and Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums. This has reduced from nearly 9,200 in 2010. 750 people work at Your Homes Newcastle. Every person who works in these services makes an important contribution to delivering our vision and priorities for the city.

How we do things is as important as what we do. In everything we do, we follow the council values: we are proud, fair and ambitious.

Proud: We take pride in and celebrate each other's achievements

- We have a positive, optimistic, can-do attitude
- We do our very best to meet and exceed the expectations of our colleagues, customers, partners and residents
- We help and support others to make a positive difference
- We make sure that we celebrate and praise each other's good work

Fair: We are honest and treat people equal to their needs

- We respect and value every person as an individual
- We listened to other opinions and points of view and embrace difference
- We are decent, fair and compassionate
- We act with integrity in everything we do
- We are accountable for our actions and our performance

Ambitious: We are passionate, determined, enthusiastic and want to success

- We believe in making the most of opportunities to help us success
- We achieve more when we work together
- We are enthusiastic about change
- We encourage others to be their best
- We have the courage to change things for the better and make a difference
- We are passionate about making Newcastle a great city

Responding to the COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated the importance of our values to how we work, and we have learned a great deal as we move towards new ways of working.

Our capacity to innovate in the way we deliver services, and what services we deliver, has been essential to supporting the city and keeping people safe, especially the most vulnerable members of our communities, as well as providing grant funding to businesses and other support. Our staff had to adapt quickly to COVID-secure measures and the associated new ways of working which were developed in consultation with our trade unions, to enable us to continue delivering key frontline services throughout the pandemic.

Some staff underwent specialist training so they could be redeployed into essential services such as care and refuse collection, whilst others supported Citylife Line, the welfare and wellbeing team, vaccination sites and lateral flow testing sites, to name just a few. Other staff had to adapt to working predominantly from home and many of our staff volunteered in their own time to help people across the city.

At the start of the pandemic, any non-frontline staff moved from working in our offices to working from home. As did our elected councillors. Following government lifting of COVID-19 restrictions, we are implementing new agile ways of working that will build on the lessons learnt during the pandemic. We will maintain safe working practices for all of our staff to enable us to use offices and workplaces in a more dynamic way.

We have carried out staff surveys to allow everyone to feed in their views about future working arrangements; including employees who have worked predominately from home and those who have continued to deliver frontline services throughout the pandemic. We are developing a new Agile Working Policy and Wellbeing and Safety Charter in consultation with our trade unions. We are also assessing our three larger office accommodation spaces and developing new floor plans that will support more agile working whilst making use of existing infrastructure and furniture to minimise costs.

The experience of delivering through the pandemic provides a baseline for further transformation, but also a shared experience that our services and staff can draw on as we look to configure our services to reflect customer demand, and the ongoing financial constraints we face as a local authority.

Our staff continue to provide high quality services and make a difference to Newcastle. They have shown remarkable resilience and are playing an important

role in helping the council to innovate and transform our services and change in the face of ongoing challenges. They are great staff, doing great things for a great city.

We are committed to having an engaged workforce; ensuring that all employees have a voice and can get involved and shape the future of our services and how we deliver them. We carry out frequent staff surveys to understand how our staff are feeling and we have staff who act as values champions, helping to embed our values of proud, fair and ambitious across the organisation, and support staff development through a range of mechanisms.

We value the relationship we have with our trade unions with whom we have a shared sense of purpose in promoting the wellbeing and workplace learning of our employees.

Working with partners

Our response to COVID-19 as a city, was underpinned by the excellent working relationships we have developed with key partners across the city, and our relationships with health, police, education, voluntary sector, businesses and other partners has never been more invaluable than throughout the crisis, where we have collaborated, often at incredible speed, in response to critical pressures and need.

Our City Futures Board evolved in 2020 from our Health and Wellbeing Board. It continues to bring together statutory partners to lead the approach to health and wellbeing for the city, to act as our COVID-19 outbreak engagement board, and with non-statutory partners, to steer planning for recovery and renewal. More information about the City Futures Board can be found on our website:

<https://democracy.newcastle.gov.uk/mgCommitteeDetails.aspx?ID=2411>

The council and partners have made particularly strong progress recently in our approach to integrating health and care provision, under the banner of Collaborative Newcastle. Underpinned by a formal alliance agreement, this sees partners collectively shaping investment decisions, and delivering services together, to tackle health and wellbeing inequalities in the city.

We are now extending the Collaborative Newcastle ethos more widely, convening a broader group of partners to tackle economic inequalities alongside health and wellbeing, and environmental sustainability. More information about Collaborative Newcastle can be found on their website: <https://www.collaborativenewcastle.org/>

We will continue this close collaboration as we look ahead to how the city recovers and renews from COVID-19, and how we will deliver and plan our own services alongside those of our partners.

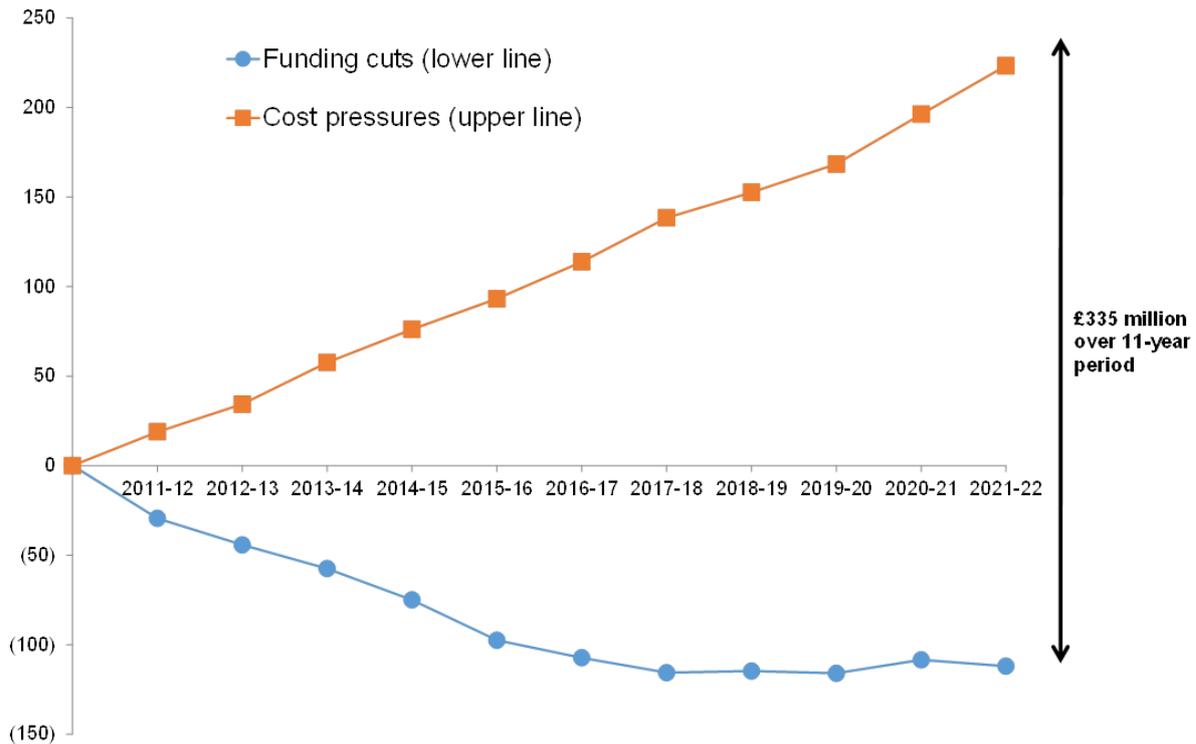
Our financial strategy and our budget

The context for our financial strategy

We spend in the region of £1 billion each year across the General Fund, Housing Revenue Account, and capital programme. Of this, approximately £140 million must be allocated to schools, £130 million to pay housing benefit to residents on behalf of the government and £110 million is ring-fenced for services for tenants who live in council-owned properties. This leaves us with around £500 million to meet our wide range of statutory requirements and the needs of residents and the city. We monitor the amount we spend with local suppliers and providers and use this to drive our approach to social value – getting the most out of the ‘Newcastle pound’ for our residents. Our capital expenditure on our physical assets (such as buildings) is separate to revenue expenditure on day-to-day services and amounts to approximately £120 million per annum.

- **General Fund:** Our revenue budget; this includes all income and expenditure related to day to day running of our services
- **Housing Revenue Account:** A separate ‘ring-fenced’ account for the management of our social housing stock, for example, rental income, repairs and maintenance
- **Capital programme:** Capital is our expenditure on physical assets (buying new or improving existing). It is separate from our revenue budget and is funded by a combination of government grants, third-party contributions, capital receipts from the sale of assets and borrowing. We cannot use borrowing or capital receipts to pay for the day to day running of services.
- **Cost pressures:** Unfunded cost pressures arise due to pay and price increases (for example, staff pay, utilities), increasing demands for services (for example, social care services) and changes to external funding (for example, grants to administer housing benefits)
- **Social value:** Value that accrues in our local communities – what residents say is valuable to them. This is built in to how we seek to buy goods, works and services: green and sustainable, buying local, community focussed, ethical.

Government-imposed funding cuts coupled with unfunded cost pressures, often driven by demand for services, have resulted in us needing to make savings of £335 million since 2010 to balance our budget.



We have sought to do this in a controlled and fair manner and by taking a medium-term rather than a short-term approach. As well as meeting our legal responsibility to set a balanced budget, this approach allows us to:

- Ensure resources are allocated to our priorities
- Improve value for money
- Maintain financial stability
- Manage significant financial risks.

The COVID-19 pandemic and resulting restrictions, which commenced in late-March 2020, had a devastating impact on our 2020-21 revenue budget. We experienced significant additional cost pressures (for example, additional payments to residential care home providers), significant income shortfalls (for example, car parking) and large-scale disruption to the achievement of planned budget savings. We have also experienced income shortfalls in relation to Council Tax and business rates.

In September 2020, we estimated the combined financial pressures to be well over £60 million. Government allocated funding to mitigate the impact of these financial pressures alongside an income guarantee scheme. However, this was not sufficient to offset the financial pressures and a range of additional management actions were required in-year to deliver a balanced budget.

In March 2021, City Council approved the budget for 2021-22 and proposals to achieve £30 million savings in 2021-22. We are working hard to deliver this to minimise the impact on future years. You can read more information about our 2021-22 budget and how we are achieving the required savings this year on our website at: <https://www.newcastle.gov.uk/local-government/budget-performance-and-spend/council-plan-and-budget/build-forward-better-our>

Our medium-term financial strategy

As we look ahead to the next medium-term financial plan, we do so at a time of continued uncertainty as a result of:

- Increasing demand for some of our services and the support people need because of COVID-19, for example in areas including mental health, learning and physical impairment and family support
- The ongoing financial impact of COVID-19 and unknown scarring, such as energy price increases, building materials price increase and shortages, reduced fees, reduced income from property, unclear levels of ongoing government support
- The changing needs of our ageing population and an increasing number of people with complex or high needs
- Awaiting details on government spending plans, including the Autumn 2021 Comprehensive Spending Review, the anticipated introduction of a Fairer Funding Formula, a potential pay freeze for public sector workers and the impact of the recently announced 1.25% health and social care levy.

While we await details from government, our current cautious and indicative assumption is that **we will be required to save around £12 million from our services per year over 2022-23 to 2024-25** in order to deliver our legal requirement to balance our budget.

The council has a good record of achieving savings and delivering a balanced budget. While many budget reductions have had an impact on services, many have been achieved by finding alternative and more cost-effective ways to deliver the same level of service, or by improving efficiency without any detriment to service delivery, as well as generating more income. However, the options for achieving budget reductions in this way are becoming more and more limited.

Our strategy is to achieve savings through continued service transformation, efficiency and appropriate inflationary price increases. We continue to explore innovative opportunities for delivering services more efficiently, and support the development and implementation of this by providing resources to enable service change and reconfiguration through transformation.

Developing our medium-term plan for 2022-23 to 2024-25

The priorities and commitments within this Council Plan drive our detailed medium-term financial and service delivery plans. The medium-term financial plan, which will be published for consultation in November 2021, will include the contribution services will make to delivering our priorities and commitments, how we will invest our resources (including our capital programme), and how we will make the savings required to balance the budget.

Last year we set out indicative plans to achieve £11.5 million of savings in 2022-23. We have assessed these plans and believe that while the majority of savings will be deliverable, further savings proposals are needed to ensure we meet our legal duty to set and operate within a balanced budget.

Looking ahead to 2023-24 and 2024-25, the scale of the savings we need to make to balance our budget means we will need to carry out further reviews of our services which will seek to identify any efficiency and income generating opportunities. Reviews will take place throughout this year and 2022-23, applying the principles of challenge and assurance to ensure services and projects are robust, with the intention of setting out transformation plans to deliver essential savings, whilst continuing to deliver on our priorities and what we know is important for our residents and meeting our many statutory duties.

Our services

We deliver an incredible range of services to our residents, communities and businesses, including areas such as health and social care, education, jobs and skills, the environment and more. Every minute of every day our services are relied on by residents, communities, businesses, and neighbourhoods right across the city.

Some of our services are universal and are delivered to all, such as waste collection, street cleansing, public health and public safety. Some are more specialist and targeted to those who require additional help and support, such as adult and children's social care, benefits advice and support and homelessness services. Often these services will be delivered in collaboration with partners, or commissioned from a range of providers, including the community and voluntary sector. Services across directorates often work closely together in the design and delivery of services, including cross-cutting priorities.

In this section we set out some of the services, projects and programmes that each directorate will be delivering over the next three years. Further detail on our services will be published in our medium-term financial plan, including impact assessments where appropriate.



Adult Social Care and Integrated Services

Adult social care and integrated services is the principal service area delivering our 'healthy, caring city' priorities, as well as contributing to 'creating more and better jobs' through improving residents' circumstances and capacity to engage with the world of work, and 'the best learning opportunities for all'. Together with our partners, they will transform the health, wealth and wellbeing of people in our city, making Newcastle:

- A great place to live and work connecting adults of all ages into their communities, whatever their health and care needs
- A world leader in longevity creating a place where people can age with vitality and continue to contribute to society in older age
- A fair city that empowers those who need help ending rough sleeping, enabling people to live independently at home, and championing the strengths in our communities

We will deliver this by:

- Making neighbourhoods central to the way we deliver social care through our Newcastle Neighbourhoods approach. This will mean social workers and care workers being part of neighbourhoods, connecting people and communities together, and using people's strengths to improve their health and wellbeing
- Expanding our health and social care academy to create more new health and social care apprenticeships leading to meaningful careers in health and social care
- Working with local people to develop new care models, housing options, and trying out new digital technologies that allow people to be independent and in control of their own care and support
- Working with our Collaborative Newcastle partners to improve community mental health support across the city, helping people to have positive mental health
- Making mental health and wellbeing a priority through the Newcastle Fund
- Working through our Safeguarding Adults Partnership to prevent the risk of harm before it arises
- Intervening early when the likelihood of harm does arise, ensuring that support and protective networks are in place for people at risk
- Acting quickly to support people who are subject to domestic abuse, including resolving immediate need for housing
- Developing more specialist housing options in neighbourhoods which support people who have care or support needs to live independently in their own communities
- Providing financial advice and support for people experiencing financial difficulties
- Preventing homelessness through our Active Inclusion Partnership approach – supporting people to move towards financial stability
- Being an ambitious and proactive partner within Collaborative Newcastle; working together across health and social care to tackle inequalities and improve outcomes for all
- Embedding the local authority, and Collaborative Newcastle, as a fundamental part of the integrated care system. Making sure that power and autonomy over financial and strategic decision making are kept in the city
- Understanding the implications of Social Care Reform for our service delivery and that of our partners; using every opportunity within it to create better outcomes for people in the city

You can read more about our adult social care services on our website site:

<https://www.newcastle.gov.uk/services/care-and-support/information-and-support-adults/adult-care-services>

Children, Education and Skills

The directorate is primarily focused on our priorities of 'the best learning opportunities' and 'creating more and better jobs', although the cross-cutting nature of our support for children and young people means we are also closely involved in delivering 'a healthy, caring city'.

The directorate is focused on making Newcastle a great place to live, grow and achieve, where all children and young people can:

- Be healthy and well cared for
- Be ready for the world of work
- Be happy and feel included
- Be heard in decisions about their lives and their city
- Be safe and feel safe

We will deliver this by:

- Supporting families to stay safely together
- Supporting babies and young children to have the best start in life, embedding the importance of the 1,001 first critical days and the foundation of good infant mental health, promoting and supporting the take-up of high quality early years, childcare and nursery provision, and working with health partners to create seamless early years offer for families
- Deploying our Children and Families Newcastle approach, an integrated early intervention service with health partners, alongside investing in evidence-based programmes that strengthen family relationships and promote safety, such as the Family Valued model and Relationships Matter. We are strengthening links between schools and early intervention services to ensure whole family working
- Working with school leaders and wider partners to embed the new secondary school inclusion and bespoke provision framework designed to improve participation in learning
- Working with partners, including health services, to ensure all vulnerable children, including those with special educational needs and disabilities achieve in education
- Safely reduce the number of children and young people in our care by embedding the Family Valued model, delivering the Right Child, Right Care programme, and embedding our edge of care services to work intensively with more families
- Improve children and young people's social, emotional and mental health and wellbeing by supporting families to improve infant mental health through attachment and early interactions and build resilience, and embedding learning from our emotional health and wellbeing team (Rise) in schools. With partners we are putting in place high quality social, emotional and mental health and autism provision
- Reduce the number of children and young people living in poverty through work with the active inclusion service to support families with income maximisation, debt, budgeting and emergency assistance, and providing life skills and engagement courses for parents to build confidence and encourage them back into work
- Ensure opportunities for lifelong learning for children and young people who are in our care, increase the number who stay in Newcastle by growing the number and range of inhouse foster carers, transforming our inhouse children's homes, and working with school leaders to ensure children in care have a full time school place in Newcastle where it is in the best interests of the child
- Help all young people into adulthood, to develop life skills and be ready for work, by identifying the future work and skills priorities for Newcastle, and

strengthening relationships with key stakeholders across the business community and further education sector to develop the right pathways for young people to progress to the outcomes they want

You can read more about our Children, Education and Skills directorate and their directorate plan on our website site at:

<https://www.newcastle.gov.uk/services/care-and-support/children/ces-directorate-plan>

Operations and Regulatory Services

The directorate principally supports our priority of 'a clean, green and safe city', delivering this by:

- Investing in local services and waste management to keep our neighbourhoods clean and green, including work with communities, partners and businesses to deliver our waste strategy action plan
- Investing in modern vehicles, equipment and digital technologies to improve efficiency and effectiveness, and in enforcement and monitoring activities to ensure waste is disposed of properly and those who dump rubbish in our city are pursued
- Developing the capacity to model and implement the city's new waste collection system for recycling, food and garden waste, as well as delivering a refreshed offer at our household waste recycling centres, and procurement of a new dry recyclables contracts to increase recycling levels to 50% plus of our waste stream and to develop a new waste transfer station
- Providing a range of public protection, regulatory and environmental services, ranging from responding to complaints about noise, littering, dog fouling, fly-tipping, vandalism and graffiti, to inspecting premises, health and safety enforcement, trading standards, and licensing management
- Being responsible for community safety, including working with the youth offending team, schools, community groups and police to tackle issues and reduce community tensions when they surface, and supporting Safe Newcastle, the community safety partnership for the city
- Delivering our community hubs and libraries which play a key role in supporting digital, financial and social inclusion and literacy in its widest sense

You can read more about some of the services delivered by Operations and Regulatory Services on our website at:

<https://www.newcastle.gov.uk/services/environment-recycling-and-waste>

<https://www.newcastle.gov.uk/services/licences-and-permits>

<https://www.newcastle.gov.uk/services/newcastle-libraries-community-hubs>

<https://www.newcastle.gov.uk/services/births-deaths-and-marriages>

<https://www.newcastle.gov.uk/services/parking-and-permits>

Place

The directorate supports our priorities of 'more and better homes', 'a clean, green and safe city', and 'creating more and better jobs'.

We support these priorities through:

- Developing a new ten-year asset and investment plan for our council housing, encouraging modernisation, supporting the demolition of redundant stock and building new where appropriate to maintain a healthy stock and pipeline.
- Delivering a range of supported and specialist housing, continuing to provide advice support and information to vulnerable people to help them secure and sustain their accommodation, and providing Disabled Facility Grants to assist people to live independently in a home of their choice.
- Investing and upgrading our full range of city network infrastructure to deliver improved resilience and safety, better opportunities for data collection and use of sensors, and improved digital offer for cultural and retail experiences across the city
- Making our neighbourhoods safe, clean and green through our network plan for safe walking and cycling routes, a programme of specific targeted measures to lower traffic levels in residential neighbourhoods, the roll out of School Streets and Play Streets, and supporting the roll out of electric vehicle chargers in residential areas
- Developing an Enhanced Partnership and Zero Emission Bus bid and considering bus priority and bus rapid transit routes on public transport distributor roads as part of a bus service improvement plan
- Creating welcoming places in our communities and neighbourhoods, making the city more accessible and inclusive, and using our capital programme to develop new schools, transport infrastructure and other facilities to support the delivery of new homes on our strategic housing sites
- Preparing land and facilities to drive our net zero ambitions, as well as the development of employment sites to support the city's jobs growth potential
- Developing a Local Plan, which will set out the city's development priorities and help us to create the spatial expression of our commitment to renewal and the Council Plan itself, as well as providing development management and building control services to ensure the city grows in a sustainable and managed way
- Managing the council's property and assets to support our city priorities

You can read more about some of the services within the Place directorate and the work on our website:

<https://www.newcastle.gov.uk/services/housing>

<https://www.newcastle.gov.uk/services/roads-pavements-and-streets/management-roads-and-highways/roads-and-highways-policies-and>

<https://www.newcastle.gov.uk/services/planning-building-and-development/planning-policy/newcastle-local-plan>

City Futures

The directorate primarily supports our priority of 'creating more and better jobs', although its work to shape the city's economic future means contributions across more than one priority.

The directorate is focused on improving our city economy, making it sustainable, inclusive, and innovative, a place where people can get good jobs, companies can

grow, and more people benefit as a result. These are underpinned by factors such as health and wellbeing, as well as environmental sustainability - demonstrating the cross-cutting nature of the directorate.

We will deliver this by:

- Working to create more and better jobs across a range of sectors, including the green economy and the foundational economy, and supporting improved skills pathways through Skills Hub and Newcastle Futures, promote the North of Tyne Good Work Pledge, working towards becoming a foundation living wage city, campaigning for decent sick pay, and take a stand against regressive cuts to Universal Credit
- Encouraging greater levels of innovation that can be rapidly translated into delivery and develop a local mission-led approach which encourages partners to work together as a 'test-bed' and promotes that offer to Government and investors, and support translation of the research and development excellence in our universities into growth, commercialisation and spin-out
- Supporting businesses to start and scale up, encouraging locally-rooted businesses, and attracting new businesses to the city. We will help more businesses to adopt new technologies and improve available finance for innovation and scale up through developing wider awareness of the city's innovation offering
- Cultivating and promoting culture as a means of developing a shared ownership of the city, as well as driving economic opportunities for our residents, using the skills of the cultural sector to provide opportunities for training, skills development and learning, and use cultural activity to enhance the profile of the city and attract investment, employment and visitors. We will put culture at the heart and service of our communities, recognising the way it can drive creativity, ambition, and emotional wellbeing, as well as economic opportunities
- Encouraging more visitors to the city, marketing the city as a place to visit and enjoy to a domestic and international audience, and search out funding opportunities and new ways of working to further increase awareness nationally and internationally of the quality and range of attractions in the city and the North East
- Shaping and overseeing our Net Zero Newcastle Action Plan, as well as acting as a convenor for the city's wider work on climate change
- Helping our members and the wider city understand the local, regional, and national policy context and develop policy in response, communicating effectively the impact the council is having on the city, and supporting the council's engagement with residents, businesses, and communities.

You can read more about the activity the City Futures directorate supports and delivers on our website at:

<https://www.newcastle.gov.uk/business>

<https://www.newcastle.gov.uk/our-city>

Public Health

Public Health services make a significant contribution to ‘a healthy, caring city’. These include services commissioned to encourage people of all ages to live active, healthy lives, supporting their opportunity to work and live well, through programmes including healthy eating, smoking cessation, support for good sexual health and addressing both causes and effects of drug and alcohol misuse.

But, the importance of good public health to the health and wellbeing of all, and the impacts of the wider determinants of health across a whole range of issues, means public health principles underpin all of our priorities. The principles of public health and wellbeing improvement must be embedded in our thinking on all aspects of council action.

Our approach supports priorities through, for example:

- Better integrating and investing in public health support in early years, critical to present and future physical and mental health of our residents
- Supporting colleagues to create and nurture green space across the city, accessible to all, which has measurable individual health benefits
- Working with colleagues and partners to ensure action to achieve carbon neutrality has the greatest possible impact on population health improvement, as well as our net zero targets
- Safety and health protection across all sectors, working to establish better detection and response systems not only for COVID-19 but for a range of health threats, building upon smart city approaches and incorporating, for example, improved water and air monitoring

You can read more about our Public Health function at:

<https://newcastle.gov.uk/services/public-health-wellbeing-and-leisure>

Resources

The Resources directorate is responsible for ensuring the council is financially sound and compliant with various legislation. It also provides services to our workforce such as human resources and information communications technology, as well as services to ensure the democratic process is observed including managing elections and freedom of information functions. It contributes to all of our priorities as a result of this enabling and supporting function, and by:

- Delivering the budget programme
- Adding value through insight, supporting change, and improving efficiency
- Supporting transformation.

You can read more information about some of the services and functions within the Resources directorate on our website at:

<https://www.newcastle.gov.uk/services/council-tax>

<https://www.newcastle.gov.uk/services/jobs-and-careers>

<https://www.newcastle.gov.uk/local-government/elections-and-voting>

<https://www.newcastle.gov.uk/services/welfare-benefits>

Your Homes Newcastle

Your Homes Newcastle supports the 'more and better homes' priority, working with the council to be first for housing and to make living easier through:

- Revolutionary services that support successful living
- Amazing places where people are proud to live

YHN supports our priorities through:

- Providing high quality homes across the city, including assisted living through our Housing Plus services which help older people live independently at home
- Working in partnership with the council's Fairer Housing Unit to review new build opportunities for council homes and to deliver more of the affordable homes programme
- Supporting the city's work to ensure everyone is off the street, into a home, and sustaining a home
- Providing maintenance and repairs to the city's housing stock, as well as support to residents which includes financial advice, digital skills, support finding a job, and advice on energy saving – all of which contribute to improving our residents' circumstances and enable them to live fuller lives

You can read more about Your Homes Newcastle at: <https://www.yhn.org.uk/>

Our statutory duties

Local authorities are legally bound to deliver or commission a vast range of services and functions which are set out in numerous Acts of Parliament. We must continue to deliver these despite our financial challenges.

We have over 2,000 duties. Examples of our key responsibilities are:

- Improving the wellbeing of under five-year olds, providing integrated early years service. Assessing the provision of childcare and advice and training to providers
- Safeguarding and protecting of children including promoting welfare, looking after the most vulnerable, fostering and adoption, providing short breaks to assist carers of disabled children
- Ensuring there is sufficient educational provision available including that for pupils with special educational needs, admissions, pupil referral units, school meals, school transport for those eligible
- Keeping in touch with care leavers and providing financial assistance and advocacy services
- Preventing, reducing and delaying needs for adult care and support, including for carers
- Establishing and maintaining information and advice services relating to care and support for residents
- Ensuring there is a vibrant market for care and support in the local area which enables people to have choice and control over their care

- Promoting wellbeing when carrying out any care and support functions in respect of a person and their carer(s). This includes looking at personal dignity, physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing, protection from abuse and neglect, control over day-to-day life, participation in work education or training, social and economic wellbeing, domestic and family life, living accommodation, and contribution to society
- Safeguarding those with care and support needs who are at risk of abuse and or neglect
- Responsible for improving the health of their local population and for public health services including most sexual health services and services aimed at reducing drug and alcohol misuse
- Preventing and relieving all residents' risk of homelessness
- Housing, including periodically reviewing needs and how we manage the Housing Revenue Account
- Establishing a Community Safety Partnership and developing a community safety strategy
- Environmental and regulatory, including trading standards, inspection and enforcement, product safety, environmental protection
- Preservation and access to monuments and listed buildings
- Preparing a Local Plan, dealing with planning applications, proactively managing development and enforcing against breaches of planning
- Licensing, including granting permits, maintaining registers, covering things such as gambling, alcohol, food safety and hackney carriages
- Biodiversity, including protection of wildlife and pest control
- Ensuring expeditious movement of traffic, providing and repairing of rights of ways, maintaining highways and ensuring works are carried out safely
- Ensuring road safety, providing traffic management and managing parking
- Collecting and disposing of waste
- Registration of births, deaths and marriages and licensing premises and venues
- Providing a comprehensive and efficient library service
- Producing annual accounts and setting a balanced budget
- Awarding benefits to eligible residents and collecting Council Tax and business rates
- How we recruit and employ our staff
- How we commission and procure supplies and services
- Responding to Freedom of Information requests

How we'll know if we're making a difference

We use a range of range of indicators to monitor the difference we're making. These are used at all levels of the organisation to monitor performance and understand the difference we are making.

We publish council dashboards four times a year to monitor whether the things we are doing are making the difference we want them to. There is one dashboard for each political priority. The dashboard takes a thematic approach to explore a specific area in more detail, for example, waste and recycling or progress towards our Net Zero Newcastle – 2030 Action Plan within the environment dashboard. The dashboards set out key indicators related to that theme and provide an overview of the actions we and our partners are taking.

Some examples of how we'll know if we're making a difference:

Creating more and better jobs: Employment

- Increase in employment levels
- Increasing proportion of people in good jobs
- Reducing gap between average weekly wage in Newcastle compared to UK
- Reducing number of residents claiming out of work benefits compared to North East and national average
- Increase in the number of apprenticeships
- Increase in the number of businesses and new business start ups
- Increased levels of inward investment
- Increased number of planning applications

The best learning opportunities for all: Education and skills

- Increase in parents and carers taking up the two-year-old childcare offer
- More pupils achieving a good level of development at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage (end of Reception)
- More pupils attending a school graded as good or better by Ofsted
- Increase in primary and secondary school attendance
- More pupils achieving the expected standard or higher in reading, writing and maths at Key Stage 2 (end of Year 6)
- Reduction in number of children and young people in our care
- Reduction in number of children and young people who have social care plans in place
- More young people in employment, education or training

A healthy, caring city: Health and social care

- Assessment against the Public Health Outcomes Framework
- Benchmarking if public health service quality through sector improvement.
- Reducing the number of adults aged 65 and over admitted permanently to council-funded residential or nursing care

- Proportion of people reporting improved quality of life as a result of the care and support they received
- Proportion of carers who have been included/ consulted in discussion about the person they care for

More and better homes: Housing

- Building new homes
- Bringing empty homes back into use
- Providing affordable homes
- Energy efficiency of homes
- Housing standards in the private rented sector
- Sufficiency of supported housing options for people with care needs
- Number of people homeless or rough sleeping
- Number of people supported to prevent homelessness

A clean, green and safe city: The environment

- Meeting our local operational service standards
- Increasing levels of waste collection and recycling
- Number of enforcement actions relating to fly-tipping and waste offences
- Reducing level of recorded crime compared to English core cities
- Delivering on our Safe Newcastle plan
- Delivering on our Net Zero Newcastle – 2030 Action Plan
- Improving air quality standards

We have robust management arrangements in place to monitor and control revenue expenditure. Detailed budget monitoring reports are considered by directorate management teams and directors' team on a regular basis and management action is taken to address any financial pressures that occur.

Reporting on progress towards our priorities, our financial position and our strategic risks will continue to take place through our quarterly Council Performance report to Cabinet, our scrutiny committees and Audit Committee.

Progress and achievements will also be reported to Overview and Scrutiny and City Council through annual reports from Cabinet members and Cabinet will host a series of Policy Cabinet meetings which will be structured around our political priorities.