

Shaping our future together

Our medium-term plan update for 2020-21



let's talk
Newcastle

Newcastle
City Council 

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1. Foreword from Leader of the Council, Councillor Nick Forbes

This budget consultation starts at a time of huge national uncertainty and political turmoil.

The timing of the 2019 General Election means that the local government finance settlement, normally published in December, is now not expected until January. Even when published this will only be a one-year Spending Round; this makes planning for the future of our city even more difficult.



What is clear is that, despite statements to the contrary, austerity is not yet over. At best it has only been paused.

Nationally since 2010 local authorities have lost a combined £16 billion. By the end of this budget cycle Newcastle will have lost £327 million, an astonishing £2,481 per household.

This one-year settlement does provide a small amount of additional funding; however, this equates to only 3.3% of what has already been taken from us and comes with the assumption from government that councils will increase Council Tax and make full use of the adult social care precept.

One again we are faced with the difficult choice to increase Council Tax by 1.95% and use the 2% adult social care precept increase to help towards the rising cost of caring for older people and some of the most vulnerable in Newcastle.

As the funding we receive from government this year is one-off money, with no clear commitment it will continue, it could vanish as quickly as it has appeared. We will use this additional money on a series of specific one-off investments to improve services, facilities and the environment.

Our proposals include planting more than 1,000 trees, upgrading play parks, improving technology in our libraries and pushing forward with our ambitious climate change initiatives. We know that fly-tipped rubbish, litter and other environmental crimes are of the highest concerns for residents, which is why we are proposing an additional £1.1 million to introduce rapid response teams and increase our enforcement activities to tackle the issue.

We continue to transform many of our care services, making sure they are as effective and efficient as possible and have the best outcomes for anyone who uses them. However, the demand for support through these services outweighs the resources available. Campaigning for a national solution to the social care crisis will form part of our lobbying to any new incoming government.

We know businesses remain committed to our city and are looking to invest in Newcastle and we will continue to work with them to create more and better jobs.

There are difficult decisions to come, but we remain committed to maintaining Newcastle as the Great North City.

Please share your views by getting involved in the consultation – I look forward to hearing from you.

2. Statement from the Chief Executive, Pat Ritchie

In this document, I am pleased to outline our plans for delivering on year two of our medium-term plan. Last year, when we published the three-year plan, I was clear we would continue to deliver on our ambitions, transforming services and achieving positive change across the city.



We remain committed to this ambition. We face increased pressures on our children and adult social services however, I am pleased to report we are broadly on track to achieve our financial and delivery targets.

Despite recent political announcements at a national level, the ongoing financial challenge facing the council has not gone away. We continue to mitigate the long-term impacts austerity has had on the city as well as increased pressure on services and changing expectations and demands from residents. In particular, the issue of climate change demands decisive action, long-term investment and some trade-offs. Our response is to continually innovate, transforming services and, of course, supporting the city's most vulnerable people.

In my introduction to medium-term plan last year, I highlighted the need to manage ongoing risk and uncertainty including future local government funding, Universal Credit rollout and Brexit. At the time of writing, we face even greater risks; Brexit remains unresolved with potential impacts to communities and businesses.

And national political instability has led to postponement of the expected Spending Review, with a one-year Spending Round instead. Whilst this Spending Round contains some welcome additional, one-off funding for councils, we remain cautious. We will invest these temporary monies wisely to benefit residents. Yet, our overall financial challenge remains so the need to achieve tough savings targets and transform services continues.

Our ambition for Newcastle is undiminished. Our plans will continue to drive growth and investment whilst providing value for money, high-performing services. We have been at the forefront of service transformation in recent years. We have taken bold decisions, such as changing the way we deliver leisure services and sustaining the city's much-loved parks. These decisions are delivering real benefits for people. Alongside this, we are seeing impressive new housing growth and investment in a road network fit for the future. Flagship developments like Newcastle Helix underline our ambition for the city to be a world leader in research, innovation and smart use of data.

Working with councils in North Tyneside and Northumberland and the Combined Authority Mayor, we are moving ahead to create a strong and inclusive economy across the North of Tyne, connecting people to new opportunities generated from £600 million of additional investment in the area.

We only achieving our ambitions by working closely with communities, partners and businesses. Yet, there is much more to do. This plan sets out how we'll continue to do this in 2020-21.

3. Financial assurance statement from Director of Resources, Tony Kirkham

The council must set a balanced budget each year. As the council's designated finance officer, I have a legal duty to report to City Council in March 2020 on the robustness of the council's budget and the adequacy of reserves.



The council has a strong track record of developing and delivering robust financial plans. In 2012, the council set out a three-year budget which left us better prepared to support the city through a prolonged period of reduction in public sector spending. In the face of continued austerity and the ensuing financial pressures we again produced a three-year budget in 2017, which looked forward to 2020.

In 2019, we set out our approach to adapting to further anticipated budget reductions over the medium-term to 2022. This was against a continued very challenging fiscal backdrop, which has seen concerns raised about the financial sustainability of many high-profile councils, requiring specific government intervention.

Although the previous government set out its intention for 2020-21 in the Spending Round announced in September 2019, there is an unprecedented level of uncertainty in relation to ongoing financial support for councils. As such it is vital that we take a pragmatic and prudent approach to setting the council's budget for 2020-21.

My current assessment is that, although the council is facing some in-year pressures, we are largely on track to achieve the tough budget limits for 2019-20. However, this may require calling on some of our reserves set aside for this purpose. The proposals set out can secure a balanced budget for 2020-21 and provide a firm basis for the development of the budget for future years.

Reserves, whilst relatively low, are adequate for the risks we face and can support the transformation programme that is set out. However, reserves are a one-off source of funding and the council needs to make permanent reductions in its net expenditure. As a result, reserves cannot be used to avoid permanent savings.

I am also confident that, subject to the approval of individual business cases, the plans outlined for capital investment can be funded through available capital receipts and resources, and the income or cost reductions from those investments.

4. What is this document for?

This report summarises Newcastle City Council's budget plans for the year 2020-2021; year two of Shaping our Future Together, the medium-term plan (MTP) agreed in 2019. We are largely on track to deliver year one of the MTP and the plans for years two and three remain substantially the same. The council will receive some additional, mostly one-off, monies from government as part of the one-year funding Spending Round announced by the Chancellor in September 2019.

This report focuses on how the council will invest those monies and should be read alongside supporting documents, all available on our website www.newcastle.gov.uk/budget

- Appendix 1 – Revenue and capital plan 2020-21
- Appendix 2 – Summary of service proposals 2020-21
- Appendix 3 – Cumulative impact assessment 2020-21
- Integrated impact assessments for changes to services 2020-21
- Medium-term plan documents 2019-2022

We need your views on this plan. And, we welcome your ideas on what we, residents, partners and businesses can do together to drive Newcastle forward.

We know we don't have all the answers. We are publishing this updated plan now to allow residents, businesses and community organisations to understand and comment on what is being proposed for 2020-21. It is subject to consultation until 26 January 2020 and we encourage everyone to have their say on the proposals.

Feedback received from you will be considered along with announcements that impact our financial position. An updated version of this plan will be presented to Cabinet in February, reflecting any changes made to the proposals in response to feedback or announcements. Cabinet will be asked to recommend the updated plan for 2020-21 to City Council who will debate and vote on the plan at their meeting on 4 March 2020.

Let us know what you think by completing a survey on www.letstalknewcastle.co.uk for proposed changes to services in 2020-21, where we also have short videos and the detailed integrated impact assessments for proposals where there will be a change to service.

5. The national funding context

One year into the council's three-year plan, we had expected a comprehensive review of public spending as part of government's planned Autumn Spending Review.

Instead, in the context of national political uncertainty, government announced a one-year Spending Round for 2020-21. Headlines from this include:

- **Inflationary increase in Revenue Support Grant and business rates.**
- **Ability for councils to levy a further 2% adult social care precept and an additional 2% on Council Tax.**
- **£1 billion from a new social care grant** – this could mean around £7.0 million for Newcastle to address adult social care and children social care cost pressures.
- **Better Care Funding will increase by 3.4%** – this could mean around £0.5 million for Newcastle, with spend to be agreed with health partners.
- **A real-term increase in the Public Health Grant** – this could mean around £0.7 million extra for Newcastle, though this funding may come with additional burdens.
- **Additional £7.1 billion increase in funding for schools by 2022-23.**
- **Additional £700 million funding for children with special educational needs** – we await details on how much extra funding we will receive next year.
- **The Troubled Families Programme will receive continued funding** – we await details on how it will operate next year.

Whilst we welcome any increase in funding from government, even if it is short-term, we must be cautious in the local spending commitments we make based on a one-year spending round. The estimated additional resource of £10.8 million for us in 2020-21 are mostly one-off monies. On this basis, it would be wrong for the council to make commitments to increased spending beyond the one-year funding offered by government.

And, of course, the latest round of funding comes on the back of nine years of national funding cuts combined with rising cost pressures on councils. In short, the temporary increase announced by government for some local services does not begin to reverse the impact of over £300m cumulative cuts and cost pressures across all council services since 2010.

This means we must continue to deliver on our savings and service reform plans and our decisions on setting Council Tax must be based on fairness and sustaining vital local services for the long-term; not on one-off grants announced by government. Government assumes in its calculation of core spending power that all local authorities will increase Council Tax by the maximum amount in 2020-21 (i.e. 2% plus the increase in the adult social care precept).

Therefore, to set a balanced budget in 2020-21, we have no choice but to increase the amount of income raised through Council Tax. We are proposing to increase core Council Tax by 1.95%, which will increase income by £2.2 million (based on an assumed 1%

increase in the council tax base). We will use this income to avoid making further reductions to services beyond those already set out in the budget report and its appendices. This increase in Council Tax is below the level that is defined as excessive by the Secretary of State for the purpose of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

In addition, we propose to also apply government's Council Tax precept for adult social care to help fund the rising cost of providing adult social care services. We are therefore proposing to increase the adult social care precept by 2% in 2020-21, which will generate an additional £2.2 million of Council Tax income (based on an assumed 1% increase in the Council Tax base) to help support vital services for older and vulnerable people in our city.

6. Keeping our three-year financial plan on track, delivering our priorities

As we move into the second year of our medium-term plan (MTP), our focus is to keep the council's finances firmly on track, sustaining vital services, protecting the most vulnerable in the city, making prudent investments in future growth and assets, achieving planned savings and managing cost-pressures. Currently our plans for delivery of savings from year one is largely on track.

In the absence of a fair, long-term funding settlement from government that is based on local need, we will use the one-year settlement announced by the Chancellor in September 2019 sensibly - delivering on our stated priorities and, where possible, going further or accelerating our plans.

However, we are clear; any temporary, additional funding from government, does not ease pressure on our budget overall and we must continue to make necessary savings and invest in transforming services to sustain them for the long-term.

7. Employment : providing more and better jobs

Being in good-quality work represents security, dignity, self-respect and hope for the future. In our three-year plan, we committed Newcastle to be a city where everyone, regardless of background or circumstances, has a choice of good-quality, fairly-paid job opportunities.

This year, we continue to drive growth in all that we do, creating jobs and funding our ambitions for the city. This is more important as we move to raising more of the money we spend through retaining business rate income. Every new business we attract to the city will not only bring jobs, they will also help fund our ambitions for the city.

In response to global recession in 2008 and subsequent government austerity, the council and key partners kept the city's economy going through a period of uncertainty. Through investment in Newcastle Helix and the Stephenson Quarter, the council laid the foundations for current and future economic growth.

Indeed, during the past few years, Helix has become an exemplar of council-led investment and development, which, as one of the biggest urban regeneration projects in the UK, will deliver substantial, positive benefits for people, including:

- 4,000 jobs
- 450 new homes
- A major UK hub for scientific research, technology and sustainability

Preparing the city's economy to respond post-Brexit

In the past year, the council has continued to deliver economic growth; developing key sites; investing in jobs and skills; attracting inward investment, growth and new jobs. More Newcastle residents are working and unemployment is at its lowest level since 2005, at 5.3% (July 2018-June 2019).

Now, as the UK prepares to withdraw from the European Union, the council remains as committed to supporting the city's economy. We are facing a period of real economic uncertainty. In the short-term there is a risk that ongoing Brexit uncertainty leads to economic downturn. In the medium-term, regardless of the outcome of current discussions on Brexit, uncertainty over the UK's longer-term trading relationship with the EU is likely to continue for several years.

We need the capacity to support the city through these challenges ensuring continued growth, jobs and overall resilience in Newcastle. And, we need to be ready to take advantage of opportunities from North of Tyne Combined Authority as well as government plans to invest in infrastructure.

Securing world-class attractions and sustaining valued city and community events

Despite pressures of austerity, the council has played its part in attracting national and global events to Newcastle. These have brought visitors, spending and jobs to the city's economy. These events include the Heineken Champions and Challenge Cup Finals and Great Exhibition of the North. These showcased Newcastle as a modern, vibrant place to live, work and invest. And such events provide opportunities to our own residents to get involved, enjoy, and be inspired. Alongside nationally and internationally important events, the council has helped sustain key city and community celebrations, notably Pride, the Mela,

Newcastle's Christmas Market and Chinese New Year. These events give all our residents the chance to celebrate the vibrancy, diversity and openness of Newcastle.

Moving into the next year we will continue to invest in an exciting programme of big events such as Rugby League's showcase Magic Weekend and This is Tomorrow music festival, whilst providing additional support and funding for smaller, community events.

Investing in the city's strategic property assets

Newcastle is a great city to do business. Yet, we recognise we are increasingly competing with cities across the world for investment, growth and jobs. We can never stand still or be complacent and so, we will continue to invest in the city, ensuring businesses of all sizes can thrive. Last year, we announced an ambitious programme of investment in property assets. This year we can commit to going further and faster in three key areas:

- 1. Walker Quay** investment will contribute to our vision for the North Bank of Tyne, help sustain businesses and jobs in the area, whilst delivering further investment and jobs growth. This will increase the capacity of the quay, enabling existing and new quay users to win more work.
- 2. Grainger Market** has been at the heart of Newcastle since 1835, attracting six million visits a year and offering a wide range of goods and foods. It's part of the social fabric and history of the city, a place where people can meet with each other and where family traders can make a living.

Despite challenges facing retailers, we are committed to investing in the future of the market. We have already refurbished its entrances, and a £3 million redevelopment of the roof is underway, planned for completion in 2020.

We will also work with traders and partners to raise the profile of the Grainger Market. This will bring it in line with other successful markets in the UK, putting it on a stable financial footing and guaranteeing its future for the next 20 years.

- 3. Eldon Square** is a great asset in the heart of the city that is performing well and provides income for the council. Yet, we know the retail environment across the UK is extremely challenging and so we need to continue to work with the operator Intu, to sustain and build this positive asset for the city. We plan to work closely with them to diversify the retail offer, providing more experiential attractions as well as exploring options to diversify the offer at Eldon Square.

8. Education and skills : the best learning opportunities for all

We want Newcastle to be recognised as a great place to be born, grow up, raise a family and develop a career. Having the best start in life sets us up for better learning, improved opportunities for life and better career prospects.

Working in partnership with schools enables us to raise standards and educational attainment. We are aiming to tackle long-term educational challenges of attendance, improving attainment and enabling more young people to access higher education.

Working with partners to offer help to families who need it ensures we are protecting the most vulnerable in our city. Intervening early to tackle problems before they escalate is key to our approach.

We are experiencing rising demand and greater complexity in our children requiring social care. We believe these demands are linked to the pressures on families resulting from national welfare reforms and government's reductions in support services to families most in need.

We have established an ambitious transformation programme, Right Child, Right Care, to intervene earlier to support more children to remain safe and well cared for at home. For those children that do need to come in to our care, we want their experience of growing up in Newcastle to be as positive as their peers. We will continue to make the case to government on funding for children's social care and will seek additional funding to deliver our three-year vision. Through our programme, we are:

- Investing in our workforce so they have the skills and capacity to provide high-quality early support to vulnerable children and families.
- Continuing to grow our fostering service so that more vulnerable children can grow up in loving family homes.
- Transforming and expanding our residential services so the most vulnerable children and young people have better access to placements that meet their needs.

We are also one of 20 councils to successfully secure Department for Education funding and support to improve work with families and safely reduce the number of children entering care. The Strengthening Families, Protecting Children programme aims to improve the safety and stability of vulnerable children and reduce the need for families to access services.

Our commitment to Newcastle: Child Friendly City is about strengthening child rights, voice and influence across the city. We were one of the first councils to sign up to achieving this with UNICEF. Put simply, Child Friendly City will help the council and city to answer two key questions; what is it like to be a child in Newcastle, and how do we make it better?

In the coming year, we will invest in strengthening the voice and influence of around 57,000 children and young people in Newcastle. And we will create a place-based movement that is ambitious for children and accelerates action to create the conditions, skills and opportunities for young people to contribute to the city's economy.

9. Environment : a clean, green and safe Newcastle

Everyone has the right to live in a clean, pleasant and safe neighbourhood. And we have a duty to protect the environment for future generations. We are continuing to transform local services, making them sustainable for the future because we know these are vitally important to residents.

Taking the lead on climate change

The council has led in responding to climate change with plans and targets for reducing carbon emissions in Newcastle. Like other places across the world, we recognise the need for a step-change in our approach to climate change. That's why in April this year, we committed to be a carbon neutral city by 2030.

As part of this commitment, we have established a Climate Change Convention with resident and partner participation at its heart. The convention will bring together experts, residents and partners to revise the city council's climate change plan, setting a route map to making Newcastle carbon neutral by 2030.

Achieving this will be challenging. The responses to climate change are complex with difficult trade-offs involved. And solutions will not happen overnight, instead requiring substantial long-term investment in the city's infrastructure, economy and housing.

In the coming year, the council will invest in the capacity needed to respond to the global climate emergency by:

- Securing the best advice and evidence to map out a net zero carbon plan, developing business cases in specific areas.
- Working with partners in the North of Tyne Combined Authority to establish a climate change citizen's assembly.
- Engaging extensively to raise the profile of existing work, manage engagement and consultation with the convention and run a high-profile climate change awareness and behaviour change campaign.
- Training members and officers to raise awareness of the climate challenge.
- Delivering short-term actions to progress reduction in decarbonisation such as moving to 100% renewable electricity.

Ensuring clean streets

We know how important clean and green streets are to our residents. That's why we're investing one-off monies to meet long-standing pressures in our localised teams to deal with litter and ensure grass-cutting in neighbourhoods.

We will also boost our rapid response teams to do things like tackle graffiti and other nuisance that can blight neighbourhoods. We have replaced the entire refuse collection fleet this year with Euro 6 compliant vehicles, ensuring that the most efficient vehicles are used. As well as ensuring clean streets, this will also create 25 new jobs; a real win-win for the city.

Sustaining a green city

To ensure Newcastle continues to be a green city for future generations and contribute to carbon reduction, we will invest in an ambitious tree-planting programme, focusing on spaces where we can maximise planting at least cost. This could provide for an additional 1,000 new trees.

Alongside this, we will spend money to preserve the trees we have; specifically, better understanding the nature of the ash dieback disease, prevalent across the UK, on the city's ash trees and exploring ways these trees can be saved or, if this isn't possible, then replaced. And we will also look at the feasibility of community orchards.

Making safe and fun places to play

The council is committed to ensuring safe and fun places for young people to play. In Summer 2019, we committed to a far-reaching playground investment programme to improve 45 play spaces in the city by:

- Improving the quality and play value of a play space.
- Delivering repairs to bring play spaces to a good and safe standard with a continued level of investment and maintenance.
- Providing a safe and accessible space for natural play.

We now plan to go further than the initial 45 spaces and invest in up to a further ten sites, ensuring even more places for children, young people and families to enjoy.

10. Health and Social Care : a healthy, caring city

We want to make sure that people can live healthy and fulfilling lives, with the right health and care support when they need it. Newcastle's population has a growing proportion of older people, more people who have complex needs and greater numbers of people with recognised learning and physical disabilities.

In recent years, the country has faced a funding crisis in adult social care, as a result of reduced funding from government, rising demand, and unavoidable cost pressures. To respond to this the council has had no choice but to reform social care, more effectively managing demand for services and supporting people to be independent for longer.

One-off monies announced by government in Autumn 2019 has not reduced the longer-term funding challenge and the tough choices set out in our medium-term plan last year. We are continuing to implement proposals we consulted on in last year's medium-term plan but to meet the continuing challenges we face, we are also putting these new proposals forward:

1. Reviewing the provision of support to people who are no longer in crisis:

- **Services in response to risk** - We will undertake reviews of services originally provided in response to a crisis to ensure these are appropriate to current needs and risk once the crisis is resolved.
 - **One-to-one in residential care** - we will review additional one-to-one support provided in residential care homes to ensure levels of support are appropriate to the needs of the person.
 - **Community Time to Think** - we will create additional Time to Think capacity in the community, with input from Reablement to provide support following a crisis/emergency and reducing the need for residential care and re-admission to hospital.
 - **Services in response to deterioration in physical and mental health** - we will undertake a review of complex care and support packages for older people to maximise their personal independence and ensure support levels are appropriate to need.
2. **Charging and financial assessment** - we are revising our charging and financial assessment policy in line with statutory guidance.
 3. **Being Well in Newcastle** - we will remodel our traditional homecare offer to provide a more flexible and dynamic services for older people with severe frailty. And, we will develop a new approach to help adults and older people with moderate frailty to live more independent lives.

11. Housing : building more and better homes

Everyone deserves to live in a decent home, have good quality community facilities in their local neighbourhoods and be supported if they have housing needs. We are committed to ensuring there is enough quantity, choice and variety of housing for local people.

We will continue building more new affordable homes for families and making more specialist properties available for older, vulnerable or disabled people.

Last year, the council delivered 162 new affordable homes and started five exciting, new schemes to deliver 150 council homes, using an innovative annuity lease back model (ALBM).

We are delivering specialist housing in every neighbourhood. This included the first council homes built in Gosforth since the 1980s at Ridgewood Gardens – housing with support for people with a learning disability, autism, or both - as well as assisted living apartments in Scotswood.

We also ensured over 500 households across the city could stay safe and independent at home with 600 adaptations undertaken and investment totalling £3.4 million.

Over 750 private-sector empty homes were returned to occupancy through council-funded advice, loans and grants. And, The Rise Scotswood saw the completion of phase one with 367 new homes built.

During this three-year plan, we are:

- Investing to save with approximately £1.8 million per annum in specialist housing, helping people to live independent, full lives whilst delivering annual savings in social care budgets. This will deliver over 650 specialist housing units for older people (including bungalows and assisted-living apartments) and over 70 specialist supported homes for people with a learning disability, autism, mental health conditions, or a combination.
- Bringing approximately 300 empty homes back into use per year.
- Delivering 1,000 net additions to the city's housing stock per year, including 150 affordable homes.

12. Transforming your public services

In the past 10 years we have had to find savings of over £300 million as a result of funding cuts and cost pressures. The scale of these reductions has made impacts on services inevitable. Yet, we have invested in transforming public services; finding alternative, more cost-effective ways to sustain services. In some cases, we have been able to improve outcomes and broaden partner and community involvement in services through our programme of transformation.

We have made substantial improvements through our transformation programme. But this is not a short-term fix. That is why we are committed to continuing to invest in service transformation, ensuring services are efficient, effective and sustainable.

We will secure a transformation reserve of £0.3 million by 31 March 2020 plus a base budget of £1.0m per annum to invest in one-off transformation projects designed to deliver savings in future years. We will ensure investment is based on robust business cases that deliver substantial efficiencies and improved outcomes for people.

Libraries – People’s Network and wireless provision

The People’s Network is an estate of 340 desktop computers that are free for the public to access and are available across 14 libraries and community hubs, Westgate College, two community run libraries and three Your Homes Newcastle supported accommodation sites. The PCs were last updated in 2014.

With additional funding, we will replace existing computers either like-for-like or provide a mixed offer of desktop PCs and tablets (mainly in City Library), allowing library users flexibility and free up space for other uses in the library. As part of these proposals, we will install a next generation wireless system providing forthcoming WiFi-6 alongside current standards.

This will enable the council to deliver high bandwidth wireless capability throughout libraries, providing a seamless experience to the public. Through this, the system will be futureproofed and take full advantage of the proposed local full-fibre network project.

13. Supporting the most vulnerable people in city

Alongside investing in future growth and jobs, we continue to support the most vulnerable people in our society.

We will continue to fund a wide range of debt and welfare advice and support services, helping those in financial difficulties through:

- **Council Tax reduction scheme** - in 2013-14 Council Tax Benefit was abolished by government, with Council Tax Support introduced in its place. At the same time, funding for this support was cut by over 10% by government. This has, in effect, increased the financial pressure of sustaining a Council Tax reduction scheme for the poorest people in our city.
- **Council Tax hardship scheme** - the council has a hardship scheme for those experiencing severe financial difficulty and unable to pay their Council Tax.
- **Discretionary housing payments (DHP)** - extra payments to help people who claim housing benefit or get the housing element of Universal Credit and are struggling to pay their rent.
- **Crisis support** - intended for those who have suffered a disaster or crisis.
- **Supporting independence scheme** - helping people resettle in the community following a stay in an institution or indeed to remain in the community rather than enter an institution.
- **Welfare rights** – providing free information and independent advice to Newcastle residents. This includes advice and information on all aspects of the state benefits system, how and when to apply for benefits and other help and challenging decisions including representation at benefit appeal tribunals. The council also operates the Housing Advice Centre, providing a service for residents in need of housing advice, at risk of homelessness, or already homeless with nowhere to stay. Staff give confidential advice, helping residents to keep their home or assisting them to find a home to meet their needs.