



Northumberland
County Council

A council that works for
everyone



Corporate Plan 2021 - 24



Contents

	pg
1 Leader's foreword	3
2 Our Vision & Aims	6
3 Tackling Health Inequalities	7
4 How	9
In everything we do, we will listen to and communicate with residents, businesses and partners and, ensure value for money in our services. We will pull our weight regionally and nationally, working with our partners to secure maximum benefit for residents and businesses.	
5 Thriving	15
We will vigorously secure more and new investment and jobs into the county.	
6 Living & Learning	21
We will care for our residents, support the most vulnerable in our society and help people to live healthy lives. We will ensure the best education standards for our children and young people.	
7 Enjoying & Connecting	31
We will maintain, protect and enhance the environment, prioritising our commitments on Climate Change. We will deliver high-quality services in all our communities and secure investment in housing and transport across the County.	

1 Leader's foreword

The Covid pandemic has had a profound impact on individuals, families, communities and businesses in every part of Northumberland. We shared the frustration of residents and businesses as restrictions had to be ratcheted up in response to the spread of the virus.

We recognise Covid is not yet behind us and we face more challenging months ahead, but as we move further into the recovery phase we are clear, as your Council, that we will continue to deliver the high-quality services you need every day, supporting and protecting the people who need help and, doing all we can to help communities and businesses recover and thrive once again.

This document, our **Corporate Plan**, sets out the Council's priorities for delivering for all our communities in the coming years, building on what we have achieved so far. All of our services and functions as well as our partnership working will be harnessed to deliver on these priorities. Our Budget and Medium Term Financial Plan sets out how our spending plans will contribute to achieving our priorities.

Throughout the pandemic, our **Local Services** teams ensured our key services such as bin collection, bulky waste and recycling sites continued as normal despite the challenges they faced.

Working in partnership with community and voluntary groups, our **Communities Together Hub** supported some of our most vulnerable residents with food, essentials, hardship funding, as well as help to overcome loneliness. And, that support to residents and communities will continue in the coming months and years.

Our **Customer Service** staff have dealt brilliantly with customer queries over the past 18 months, helping to keep our residents informed and to answer the questions and concerns residents had about the Covid restrictions and supporting contact tracing and isolation advice.

Our **Children and Adults Social Work Teams** adapted quickly to maintain services to families and vulnerable adults. As a result, our Children's Services were able to maintain services as usual and our Adult Services were able to support Care Homes across the county in the most challenging of circumstances.

Throughout the Covid pandemic, our **Public Protection Team**, including **Trading Standards**, have very much been on the frontline of providing support and advice to businesses, helping with compliance and only where necessary taking enforcement action.

As Leader of the Council, I am proud of the achievements of our fantastic staff during Covid.



Cllr Glen Sanderson
Leader of Northumberland County Council

Throughout the Covid pandemic, your Council has continued to deliver for communities the length and breadth of Northumberland. We have done everything we could to support businesses to weather the economic storm and to begin to recover.

Despite the challenges of Covid, we have remained focused on long-term strategic issues too. **Tackling climate change** is the biggest challenge of our generation and I am passionate about ensuring the Council does all it can to address this. That's why I am delighted that the target of reducing the County Council's own emissions by 50% against 2010 levels has now been achieved 4 years ahead of the 2025 deadline. Whilst the Covid restrictions have undoubtedly impacted on this, I am determined we build on this progress as we move into recovery.

We are building a Net Zero focus into our procurement & commissioning processes for all new contracts. **Over 5,000 residents have signed up to be part of the Council's Resident Network for Climate Change.** Projects are underway across the five direct action areas identified in the **Climate Change Action Plan 2021-23** namely **Heat, Transport, Renewable Energy, Sequestration and Waste.** We have been successful in securing Government funding to support the provision of some on-street Electric Vehicle Charging Points across the county to help people without access to a private driveway to access charge points.

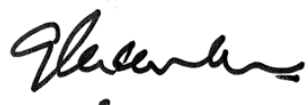
We also continued to attract investment and high-quality jobs to the county, including the BritishVolt Gigafactory as well as the wider development of Northumberland Energy Park and Town Centre Regeneration. Whilst Covid has been challenging, as a Council, we continued to lay the foundations for future recovery and growth.

As Leader, I have had to make tough decisions during the past year. In September 2020, I took the decision, with Council Leaders across the region to implement Covid restrictions to tackle the spiralling rate of infection we were facing at the time. This was a decision I never thought I would have to take during my time as a County Councillor and I do not underestimate

the impact these restrictions had on our residents and businesses. However, it was the right decision as it helped to reduce the rate of infection, protecting our residents from serious illness and ultimately saving lives.



I thank all our staff, partners and the many volunteers and community groups for their dedication, effort and achievement during this time. I want to assure our residents and businesses that the Council will continue to support communities to recover and once again thrive in the coming months and years.



Cllr Glen Sanderson

Leader of Northumberland County Council



Community Support Hub Cramlington



BritishVolt, Blyth



Northumberland Line

2 Our Vision & Aims

Our overarching priority, as we recover from the Covid pandemic is to do all we can to ensure Northumberland is a stronger place both economically and socially. We will invest in, and encourage business, attract new job opportunities, care for those who need our support, and build upon those things that were important and valued by residents during the pandemic.

Thriving	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We will vigorously secure more and new investment and good quality jobs into the county.
Living, Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We will care for our residents, support the most vulnerable in our society and help people to live healthy lives.• We will ensure the best education standards for our children and young people.
Enjoying, Connecting	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We will maintain, protect and enhance the environment, prioritising our commitments on Climate Change.• We will deliver high-quality services in all our communities and secure investment in housing and transport across the County
How	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We will pull our weight regionally and nationally, working with our partners to secure maximum benefit for residents and businesses.• In everything we do, we will listen to and communicate with residents, businesses and partners and, ensure value for money in our services.

The rest of this document sets out detailed priorities for delivering against our Vision & Aims, with measures, targets and key delivery projects.

Two overarching themes tie all our priorities together:

- Ensuring the Council does all it can to support economic recovery and growth across the county; and,
- Tackling inequalities within our communities, supporting our residents to be healthier and happier.

3 Tackling Health Inequalities

We know that pre-Covid, significant health inequalities existed between our most and least deprived communities. Initial evidence suggests that some of these inequalities have widened during the Covid pandemic due to the direct impacts and indirect impacts (due to loss of work, reduced wages, loss of education and loneliness due to social restrictions) of COVID on communities who were already experiencing worse health prior to the pandemic.

We also know that health and wellbeing is determined by a wide range of factors such as employment, poverty, housing, education and environment and that many of these factors have been adversely impacted through Covid. For example, many people have also had to cope with a reduction in income and increased financial pressures as businesses closed during the lockdown periods. The wellbeing of young people has been particularly impacted by interruptions to school, college and university terms as well as lack of interaction with their friends at critical stages in their emotional development.

The unprecedented pressure on our health services during Covid has also created a backlog of hospital treatments and we are already seeing increased demand for GP appointments and emergency care as well as delayed presentations of cancer and other diseases.

There were also some unexpected, short-term positive benefits. In particular, the initial lockdown period saw a profound reduction in vehicle emissions as many people had to work from home. Less traffic and fresh air encouraged more people to get out and enjoy the benefits of walking and cycling in their local areas.

As our communities continue to recover from the Covid pandemic, the Council is committed to working with all partners to reduce health inequalities in our communities. Everything the Council does - providing great education facilities, ensuring new, affordable homes, tackling climate change, keeping neighbourhoods clean and safe, helping vulnerable residents, providing parks, open spaces and leisure & cultural facilities, as well as support to ensure the best start in life – these all have an impact on our residents' health and wellbeing.

All of this goes hand-in-hand with ensuring people have access to good job opportunities, because having well-paid, fulfilling employment can make a huge contribution to our wellbeing.

Therefore, as a Council, we will through this Plan and our new Health and Wellbeing Strategy, harness all our services, functions and spending power to improve health and wellbeing outcomes across all our communities, going further and faster in our most disadvantaged communities.



Eastlea Primary pupils

3 Tackling Health Inequalities

Tackling health inequalities is both long-term and complex. Key trends such as life expectancy are, in many ways generational and the result of conditions experienced over decades. Turning these long-term trends around will take many years.

Yet, there are many things we can continue to do now to start to make a difference. In particular, giving children the best start in life will make a profound, positive impact on health and wellbeing for many years to come.

We are already delivering a wide range of actions to help families with the 'best start in life'. We are committed to charting progress through measures such as:

- Improving school readiness of children starting reception year
- Reducing smoking in people living in our most deprived communities or working in routine or manual occupations.
- Improving attainment at key stages of education
- Reducing the number of young people not in education, employment or training

The Council cannot achieve this alone. We need to work in partnership with public agencies, businesses and community groups, harnessing the many health, education, economic and other partnerships we have to focus our collective efforts. Above all, we need to work with our families in the context that they live, work and socialise.

Place-based approaches to tackling health inequalities

- Working with partners to develop integrated plans at neighbourhood and place-level
- Ensuring all functions of the council understand their role and contribute to reducing health and equalities
- Ensuring plans capture all council functions
- Engaging community members and voices in planning and delivery
- Identifying cross-council targets for addressing health inequalities
- Considering how regulatory and other functions can contribute to place-based plans to better address health inequalities (for example planning, licensing, environment, transport, environmental health, leisure)
- Using community-centred approaches to improve health and wellbeing, and building social capital to help communities to reduce inequalities
- Working with employers, including the NHS, to improve access to employment and the health and wellbeing of employees
- Considering addressing inequality by devolution of power and resources from the local to community level



Giving children the best start in life

4 How

In everything we do, we will listen to and communicate with residents, businesses and partners and, ensure value for money in our services. We will pull our weight regionally and nationally, working with our partners to secure maximum benefit for residents and businesses.

We are responsible for ensuring every penny of your public money is spent wisely on services and initiatives that are most important to residents, communities and businesses. We will continue to be financially prudent, making investment decisions based on robust business plans and securing value for money in our service delivery. We will be ambitious in our capital investment programme, whilst taking a sensible approach to use of reserves, borrowing levels, grants and loans to third partners.

Through our improvement and innovation plan, we are challenging all of services to be lean and efficient, embracing new ways of working that minimise waste and remove duplication. We continue to review and evolve how we work with partner organisations such as Advance Northumberland, Active Northumberland, and

Northumberland Tourism, to make sure they are delivering the right activities and offering value for money. We have strengthened relationships with key partners such as the North of Tyne Combined Authority (NTCA) as well as our Town and Parish Councils, working collaboratively to secure the best outcomes for residents. We will continue this in the coming months and years.

As public finances become tighter and pressures on services increase, we will have to make difficult decisions on budgets. However, when taking those decisions, we are committed to engaging with our residents and partners, to ensure we deliver on the services, facilities and improvements they value most. A key part of this is ensuring more decisions are taken at a local level through Local Area Councils as well as Town & Parish councils.



Engaging with towns and parishes

How - Achievements

- Since April 2020, the Council has accessed Government funding to support Northumberland-based businesses through the Covid pandemic. Over £200m has been paid out by Northumberland County Council (NCC), via Government grants, to local businesses. Between November 2020 and September 2021 over 37,000 payments have been made by NCC to Northumberland businesses.
- Throughout Covid, the Council has played a pivotal role in communicating key messages to residents and businesses, helping to keep people safe and advising on what residents and businesses could do, as well as helping people access vital services such as COVID-testing facilities. Working with

neighbouring councils and partners, our campaigns have helped to reduce the spread of Covid in partnership with residents and Covid community champions at critical points as well as achieving high rates of vaccination across our population.

- Our Customer Services adapted quickly to Covid restrictions and continued to operate throughout, ensuring our residents' queries were answered and they were able to access the services they needed. Alongside this, we have progressed work to make more services and transactions available online and digitally – indeed the need to respond to Covid restrictions, in many ways, accelerated this work.

- Our ways of working across all services have adapted quickly and effectively to the fast-changing circumstances. Alongside this, we have progressed the refurbishment of County Hall over the past year, ensuring a modern, fit for purpose facility for the future.

Over £200m has been paid out by Northumberland County Council (NCC), via Government grants, to local businesses in recognition of the impact local and national restrictions have had on trading conditions.



Shop Local - Government grants for local businesses

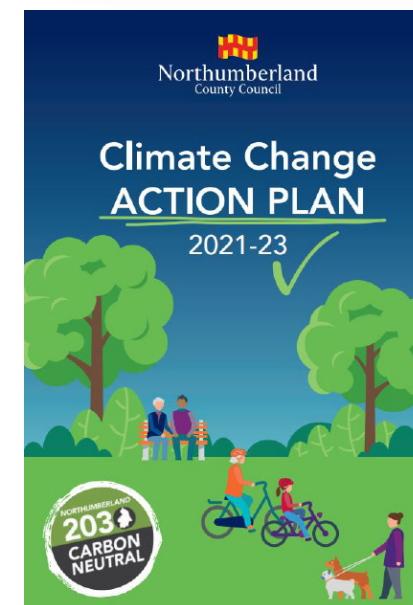


Access to vital services

How - Priorities

- Strengthen and invest in our partnership working with neighbouring councils and, ensure Northumberland maximises opportunities from NTCA to drive economic recovery and support thriving communities in the county
- Strengthen working with Town and Parish Councils - offering Cabinet Member visits to each one over the next 4 years
- Review Local Area Councils to enhance Community Engagement
- Consider options to recognise local public service, in particular, recognising the huge contribution from our residents, businesses and partners during the pandemic
- Deliver the Council's Climate Action Plan
- Deliver the Borderlands Place Programme alongside other initiatives to drive rural economic growth and strengthen the relationship and collaboration with our Borderlands partners

- Undertake, in the next two years, three 'root & branch' reviews of service expenditure, performance and outcomes in major areas of spend
- Build a future workforce, responding to the challenges and opportunities of Covid recovery across the county through delivery of our HR / OD People Strategy
- Ensure the Council makes the best use of its land and buildings by refreshing our Plan for estates and assets
- Develop a year-by-year profile of income and spend for the Council's external trading companies and produce regular update on financial impacts of transfer of Adult Social Care staff from the Hospitals Trust
- Significantly improve our customers' experience when they contact and transact with the Council
- Refresh and agree the Council's Communications Protocol and update our Regional Communications Strategy



How - Actions & Measuring Progress

Maximise opportunities from Combined Authority

- Ensure Northumberland's economic priorities are reflected in the NTCA representations to Government's Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) – make CSR to Government by September 2021
- Pipeline development of the Offshore & Infrastructure Fund proposals and prioritisation exercise complete - Nov 2022
- NTCA rural narrative, to inform the future rural programme and investments, complete - March 2022
- Future Connectivity Programme, within the NTCA digital programme, development and associated business case complete - March 2022
- Full business case for Northumberland's Culture and Creative zone agreed by Cabinet and submitted to NTCA - June 2022

Strengthen working with Town & Parish councils

- Cabinet Member visit to every Town and Parish Council offered over the next four years

Enhance community engagement

- Local Area Council review completed by March 2022

Recognise local public service

- Consider options and implement a Local Public Service recognition scheme by March 2022

Drive rural economic growth

- Complete town-based consultations on Place Plan vision, objectives, and intervention longlist by March 2022
- Submission for approval of Berwick Theatre Outline Business Case to UK Government by March 2022

Deliver the Climate Action Plan

Work closely with our residents and communities.

- Hold at least 4 public engagement events, extend our community climate champion network, strengthen connections with our business community and engage residents through continuation of the annual free tree scheme.
- Work closely with rural communities, to provide support to the farming community and to help deliver the Great Northumberland Forest as we look to expand upon the 500ha being planted by 2025.

Lead the way nationally in delivering net zero through 'electrification' of transport and our estate.

- Install at least 75 EV charge points every year for the next three years, continue to upgrade the council fleet with the target to have 50% of eligible vehicles upgraded to EVs by 2025 and build a solar car port at County Hall.
- Work with the business community, including British Volt, to create a world class supply chain in Green Technology.

Deliver schemes that help our residents to tackle climate change directly every day.

- Roll out the warmer home programmes to more than 500 households to reduce emissions, improve heating efficiency and resilience.
- Continue to pilot solutions for food waste, glass recycling and synthetic heating fuels.

Review expenditure, performance and outcomes

- Three root & branch reviews of service expenditure, performance and outcomes completed by March 2023

Make best use of land and buildings

- Refresh the Council Plan for estates and assets by March 2022

Refresh our communications strategy

- Refresh the Council's Communications Protocol by March 2022
- Contribute to the NTCA Communications Strategy by March 2022

Build a future workforce

- Delivery of the Council HR / OD People Strategy by 2025

Improve our customers' experience

- Develop Customer Response strategy for NCC by March 2022 and then track and report customer satisfaction scores for all customer channels

External trading companies and ending the NHS Trust partnership

- Produce regular update on financial impacts of transfer of Adult Social Care staff from the Hospitals Trust
- Produce regular financial updates on the Council's external trading companies



Adult Social Care

Our vision is:

One council that works for everyone

Our values are:

Excellence and quality



- Respect the diverse communities we serve
- Act on feedback to ensure the best customer journey
- Look for opportunities to improve customer experience

Respect



- Build strong and long lasting relationships based on trust and mutual respect
- Involve communities and staff in decisions which affect them
- Support communities to embrace change and innovation

Residents first



- Respond to the needs of all our residents
- Provide the right information at the right time
- Deliver services that have positive outcomes for the community

Keeping our communities safe and well



- Quality and safety will be at the heart of everything we do.
- We will empower our residents to do as much for themselves as possible
- We set clear standards and report against them

5 Thriving

We will vigorously secure more and new investment into the county.

Pre-Covid, we were already laying the foundations for future economic growth across the county. Our focus is now to support our economy to recover and return to strong growth through a five-point plan:

(i) Investing in the transition to a future economy

Clean energy and clean growth represent a huge opportunity for economic recovery and future growth in Northumberland. We already have international assets at **Energy Central in Blyth**, with substantial investment committed by the Council and Combined Authority. There is a growing cluster of companies operating in the offshore energy and subsea markets. The ongoing development at **Northumberland Energy Park** will make available strategic, quay-linked sites, with Enterprise Zone opportunities. These sites will link to internationally recognised innovation and R&D assets with independent test and research facilities as well as the wider local town regeneration scheme in Blyth.

(ii) Investing in our places, culture and tourism

In a post-Covid world, **Northumberland represents a future model for sustainable growth** that will contribute to a resilient UK Plc. Pre-Covid, tourism was a significant contributor to the county's economy, supporting over 15,000 jobs and bringing increasing visitor numbers. We are renowned for our welcoming people, globally renowned culture and landscapes. In Hadrian's Wall, we have a unique attraction and, our National Park and coast are 'areas of outstanding natural beauty'. So, with support, we are confident tourism will recover and come back stronger than ever.

We are also at the forefront of creating a re-imagined way of rural life that, in a post Covid world, will go from strength to strength. We will build on opportunities for **innovation and growth of agri-technologies**. With England's

largest man-made forest in Northumberland as well as the presence of the Forestry Commission, there are opportunities for trialling new **forestry technologies**.

We have a programme of investment in the **renewal of our towns** which will improve facilities and connectivity for communities as well as attracting investment into town centres and surrounding areas.



Hiking near Hadrian's Wall

Thriving

We want to attract more and better jobs.

(iii) Investing in transport, digital and connectivity

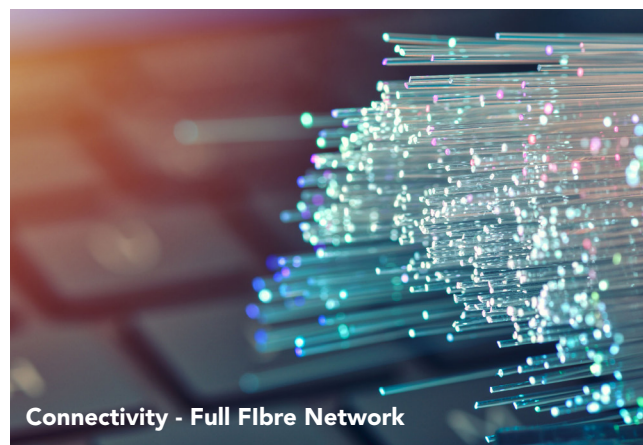
The connectivity of Northumberland is key to driving future job growth, reducing carbon emissions and tackling inequalities. Responding to changes in working seen during the Covid pandemic, with greater numbers of people wishing to work from home long-term, as well as **ensuring connectivity for businesses, requires upgrades to transport & digital infrastructure.**

(iv) Investing in our people, jobs, skills and livelihoods

The people of Northumberland are our number-one asset. The entrepreneurial, hard-working and friendly communities make the county what it is. We know higher level and new skills are required to drive the growth of key sectors. We also know that post-Covid, we could see changes to employment in some sectors as well as people seeking to change careers. Ensuring we have **programmes in place to support people and businesses** is key in maintaining business stability and growth and helping our residents realise their potential.

(v) Investing in a green recovery

We have declared a 'climate emergency' - pledging to **halve the Council's carbon footprint by 2025 and to work with Government to make the county carbon neutral by 2030.** Alongside Government's plans for carbon reduction and green energy, this creates opportunities to make investments as part of our ambition to be the country's leading rural green economy. These include green energy projects, sustainable transport solutions, partnerships with local communities and businesses as well as protecting and enhancing our natural resources.



The people of Northumberland are our number-one asset. The entrepreneurial, hard-working and friendly communities make the county what it is.

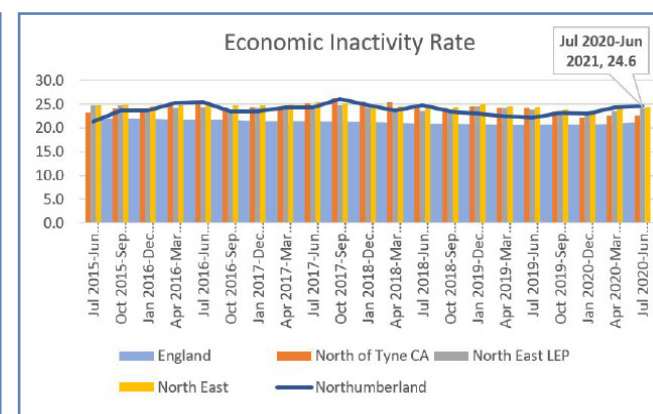
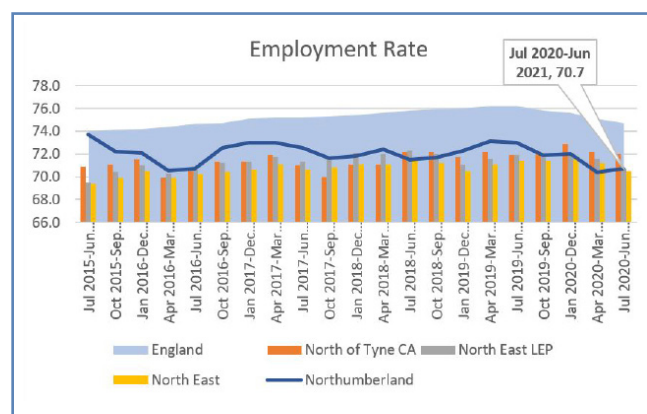
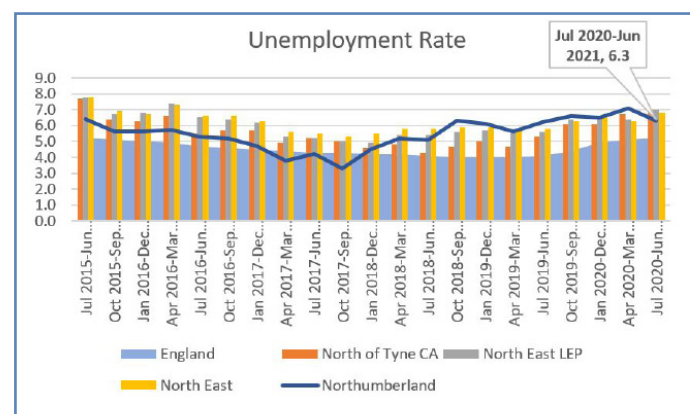
Thriving - Achievements

- BritishVolt is on target to manufacture some of the world's most sustainable, low carbon battery cells on the site of the former Blyth Power Station. Work has started on site at the BritishVolt development at Cambois, with BritishVolt commencing enabling works on the Gigaplant site. The development will bring 3,000 highly-skilled jobs and another 5,000+ in the associated supply chains. Once at full capacity, the Gigaplant will have a production capability equating to approximately enough cells for around 300,000 electric vehicle battery packs per year, intended primarily for the automotive industry.
- Work is continuing at pace on reopening the Northumberland line to passenger travel helping to connect communities to jobs and other opportunities across the North of Tyne area. The Council is working with the Department for Transport, Network Rail and Northern Trains Ltd on the ambitious programme to reintroduce regular passenger trains between Ashington and Newcastle by 2024 - boosting education, employment and housing prospects for the region. The planning applications required to deliver the re-opening of passenger rail services on the Northumberland Line remain on track. The application for Chase Meadows footbridge in Ashington was the first of the Northumberland Line applications to be granted planning permission. The Council has also submitted planning applications for new stations at Ashington; Bedlington; Blyth Bebside; Northumberland Park and Seaton Delaval with decisions expected in the coming months.
- The Council has played a pivotal role in supporting businesses across key sectors to survive the Covid restrictions and prepare for recovery. Since April 2020, the Council has accessed Government funding to support Northumberland-based businesses through the Covid pandemic. Over £200m has been paid out by NCC, via Government grants, to local businesses in recognition of the impact local and national restrictions have had on trading conditions. Between November 2020 and September 2021 over 37,000 payments have been made by NCC to Northumberland businesses.
- The multi-million Borderlands programme of investment in rural growth and regeneration across the England-Scotland Border is making good progress. Partners are working together to deliver transformative change across the region to maximise the benefits of growth. Borderlands projects are focusing on several key themes including: digital technology; innovation; low carbon; and energy.



Thriving - Key Trends

These latest trends for unemployment and employment rates show that, following the economic challenges from the Covid lockdowns, we are showing signs of recovery with most trends heading in the right direction. However, the Economic Inactivity rate is increasing influenced by a substantial growth in early retirement. This is similar to trends following the recession in 2008.



*Data as at November 2021

Thriving - Priorities

- Drive the development of Northumberland Energy Park including the building of the BritishVolt gigaplant
- Deliver and champion initiatives tailored to supporting rural businesses to start up, grow, and innovate
- Deliver the Energising Blyth Programme of investment over the next five years in the Town and secure 'Levelling Up' funding to deliver town regeneration across the county
- Re-open the Northumberland Line to passenger transport and develop an 'Economic Growth Corridor' along its route
- Secure funding for major road and junction infrastructure in the county, including at Moor Farm, A1 dualling and construction of the Blyth Relief Road
- Secure a partnership for better bus services in the county and work with Government to maintain and enhance existing rail services



Thriving - Actions & Measuring Progress

Develop Northumberland Energy Park

- Area of site reclaimed or developed (March 2022)

Deliver town regeneration

- Complete Culture Centre Feasibility Study and Business Plan by November 2021
- Number of Project Business Cases approved by March 2022

Re-open the Northumberland Line to passenger transport

- Planning approval for all 6 proposed stations by December 2021
- DfT approval of Full Business Case and receipt of final funding to enable commencement of construction by March 2022

Secure funding for major road and junction infrastructure

- Submission of revised Outline Business Case for Blyth Relief Road to DfT for approval by November 2021 approved by March 2022

Support rural businesses

- Number of businesses supported by the North of Tyne Rural Business Growth Service (March 2022)

Secure a partnership for better bus services

- Supporting Transport North East in the preparation and submission of a Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) for the region by November 2021



6 Living & Learning

We will care for our residents, supporting the most vulnerable in our society as well as encouraging active citizens. We will ensure the best education standards for our children and young people.

We want everyone to feel happy and well.

Good health and wellbeing is the most important thing for all of us and is as much to do with the things that make us feel well, as it is preventing the conditions that cause ill health, such as smoking and drug and alcohol misuse. When we feel content and well, we experience positive relationships and enjoy a good work and home life.

We want residents to enjoy a long and healthy life and we will support them to do this by **working with them which will help achieve and maintain positive and healthy lifestyles**. We will create the conditions where people can achieve a healthy life and provide services for those that need it. This includes ensuring people of all ages and backgrounds have access to green spaces and the local countryside for recreation and leisure activities. We will continue to invest in our leisure and cultural assets with our ambitious capital programme, offering investment in a number of new leisure centres. We also know that loss of dignity, being scared or feeling lonely can cause

untold anxiety. We will not tolerate any form of abuse, and safeguarding the welfare of our vulnerable residents is paramount. We will also provide tailored support for people with defined care and support needs in a way that puts them in control and, gives confidence and resilience to live independently as part of the wider community.

Within this, we will continue to promote **Ageing Well to help older people stay active, connected and well**. Struggling to make ends meet and being in debt continues to be a challenge and has been impacted by Covid. Supporting more residents into work and - just as importantly - those who are on low wages into better paid jobs, is also critical and provides the prospect of a rewarding career. Narrowing the gaps in our education performance continues to represent a key challenge but one where progress is being made despite the huge challenges to education presented by Covid. We have continued to work closely with our schools

over this significant period of disruption. As schools were impacted, we acted quickly to help them adapt to remote learning, provided digital equipment to supplement national schemes and wellbeing support for staff and pupils, as well as supporting a safe return for pupils into the classroom. We are now working with our schools to understand the impact the past 18 months has had on children and young people's social and educational development and are supporting the delivery of catchup programmes and targeted tuition to tackle these gaps.

We are also **committed, through Children's Services to providing sustainable support to children and families into the future**, innovating new ways of working and focusing on early intervention backed up by adequate investment.

Living & Learning - Achievements

- Northumberland County Council's commitment to provide a multi-million-pound learning and leisure project in Ponteland is now complete and has now welcomed students and leisure users through the doors. The community of Ponteland and its surrounding areas are benefitting from one of the council's largest ever capital programmes. The now completed first phase of the £43m project introduces state-of-the-art leisure buildings, and brand-new facilities for primary and high school students in the area.
- Northumberland County Council's schools investment and improvement programme is gaining pace with

projects completed, nearing completion and beginning despite Covid-19 setbacks. Multi-million-pound investments across the county are part of the council's largest ever capital programme, improving education prospects for all. In the north of the county £40m has been allocated for a new school to replace the ageing Berwick Academy buildings. Investment is planned at Seaton Valley as well as James Calvert Spence College in Amble, where the Council will be developing plans to improve the school facilities to meet the demand of a 21st century curriculum.

- Significant capital investment has been



Multi-million-pound investments across the County are part of the council's largest ever capital programme improving education prospects



made to improve the quality of leisure facilities across the county. This investment includes a £5m upgrade of Blyth Sports Centre, a £21m new sport and leisure centre in Morpeth, a £1.5m upgrade of Newbiggin Sports Centre and a new £22.5m sport and leisure centre in Berwick.

- We ensured local parks and open spaces were safe and accessible to residents during the Covid pandemic – giving people a valuable outlet to maintain health and wellbeing during the challenges of lockdown. Close working arrangements were established last spring/summer with a range of partner organisations to

better manage the visitor numbers across the county. Work included the Love it Like It's Yours campaign encouraging positive responsible behaviours, enhanced littering / toilet cleaning and parking enforcement activity, additional overflow parking provision and new restrictions at pinch point areas.

- We adapted our Library Service during the Covid restrictions to maintain services to those who needed them most and, critically, helped potentially vulnerable residents cope with periods of isolation by offering a 'befriending service'.

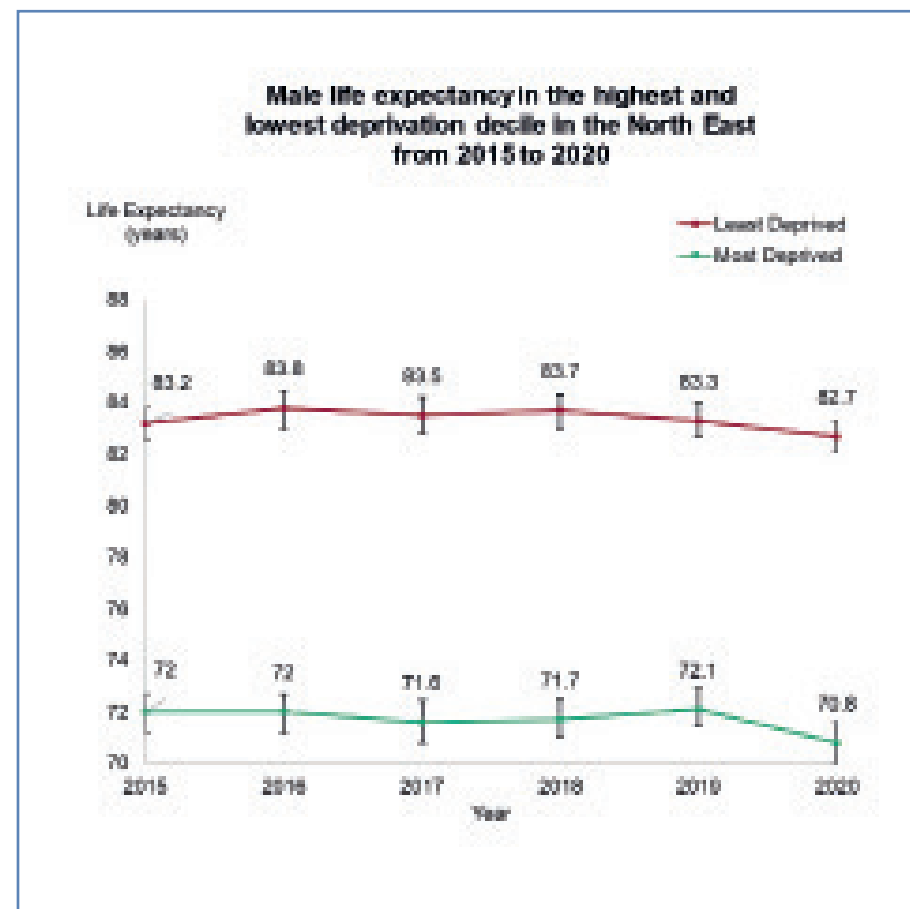
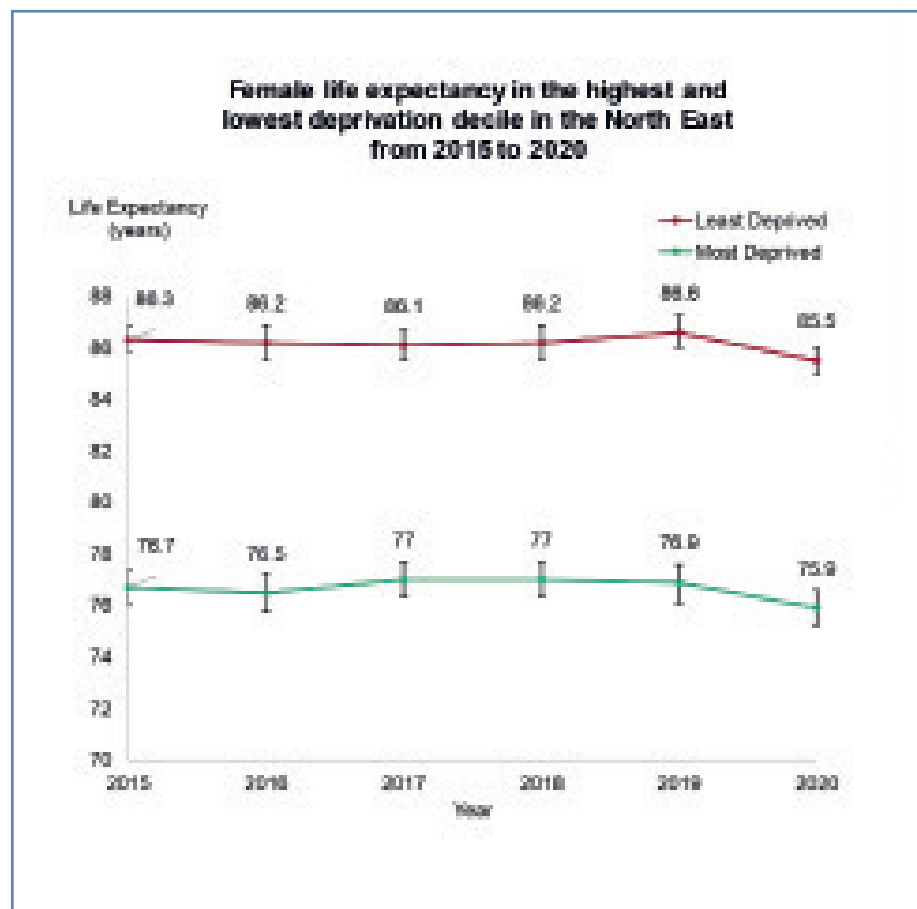


- We supported the survival and recovery of Tourism and Hospitality businesses through direct grants; adapting the Discover our Land campaign to the restrictions of Covid; creating 'Lockdown Stories' an online exhibition that showcased artwork, music, poems and writing produced by Northumberland residents during the lockdowns; and, launching the 'Shop Local' campaign to support local businesses.

We supported the survival and recovery of Tourism and Hospitality businesses

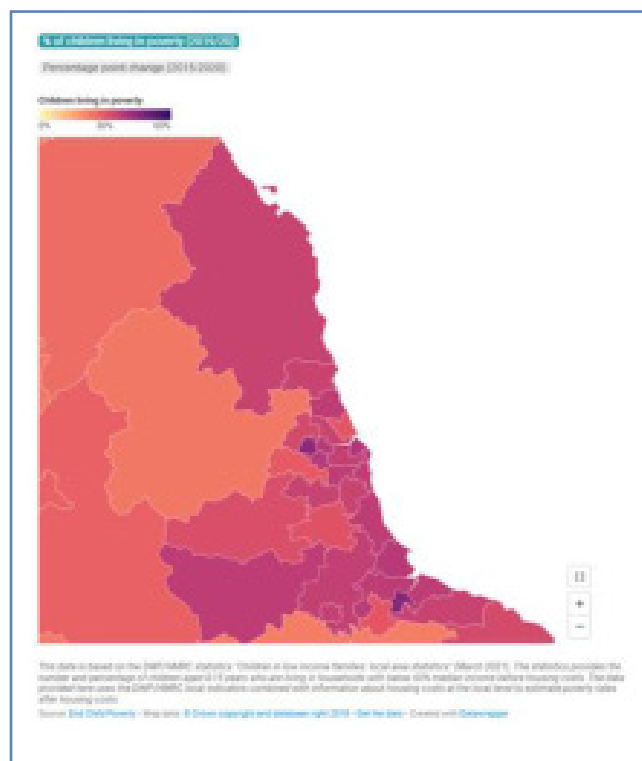


Living & Learning - Key Trends



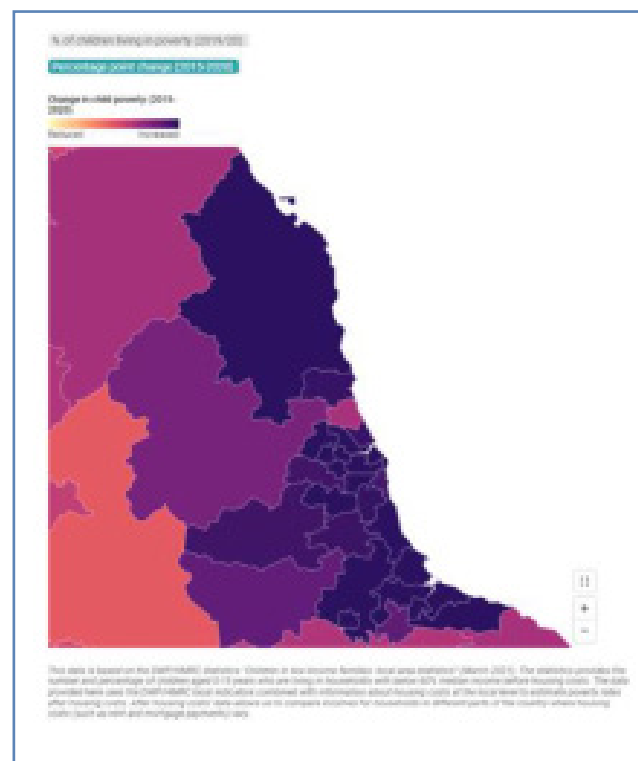
Life Expectancy. Wider impacts of COVID-19. PHE.

Living & Learning - Key Trends



% of children living in poverty 2019/20

- England – 30%
- North East – 37%
- Northumberland – 36.2%
- Berwick-upon-Tweed PC – 35%
- Blyth Valley PC – 37%
- Hexham PC – 24%
- Wansbeck PC – 35%



Percentage point change 2015-20

- England + 2%
- North East + 11%
- Northumberland + 9.8%
- Berwick-upon-Tweed PC + 10.2%
- Blyth Valley PC + 3.6%
- Hexham PC + 6%
- Wansbeck PC + 9.5%

Child Poverty remains a huge challenge nationally, regionally and locally, where there has been an increasing trend over the past five years. Whilst the challenge of poverty is complex and long-term, we are committed to taking action now to improve the life chances of our young people, including:

- **Helping to give children the best start in life** through a range of Public Health and Children's Services initiatives and support.
- **Supporting young people to fulfill their potential** through investment in modern, innovative education facilities.
- **Working with the Combined Authority** to ensure people of all ages have skills for the future economy.
- **Attracting high-quality jobs** which will help to lift families out of poverty.

Living & Learning - Priorities



- Tackle health inequalities and support health & wellbeing recovery from the impacts of Covid by delivering a 'Health in All Policies' approach
- Work with partners to reduce Food and Fuel Poverty through the delivery of a programme of targeted and countywide initiatives
- Support providers to develop effective approaches and champion good practice in tackling sexual violence, harassment and prejudice-based hate
- Develop Northumberland Communities Together model, delivering Locality Coordinators, refreshing the 6-month delivery plan and, agreeing a Community Hub model
- Develop and deliver the Domestic Violence Strategy including achievement of the White Ribbon accreditation programme and delivery of a zero-tolerance campaign
- Progress delivery on planned sites for extra care housing and explore potential site options for a 'Dementia Village' as well as opportunities for more 'Homes for Life' as part of new Council House building

- Embed the Education Strategy Board with stakeholders and Schools to create a singular narrative for improvement and to coordinate joined-up actions and increase the number of schools with Ofsted gradings that are good or outstanding
- Deliver new and ambitious developments to improve skills and the link between learning pathways and opportunities in the economy, such as the Energy Central Learning Hub, the new Northumberland College Campus and exploration of the 'Challenger Project'
- Review capacity and resource availability to provide localised provision for SEND students
- Deliver school builds at Berwick, Seaton Valley and James Calvert Spence
- Raise Corporate Parenting awareness across Members and officers including employment/housing and leisure offer to care leavers
- Increase the number of skilled Social Care staff available for delivery of services within the county and reduce numbers of agency staff

- Renew the Council's commitment to providing high quality countywide leisure and sport provision, and facilitate equality of access to outstanding cultural opportunities
- Work closely with ambitious tourism and cultural partners to invest in new and innovative projects which will bring increased benefit to our residents, visitors, and economy
- Encourage an active lifestyle by ensuring our open spaces, sports pitches, parks & country parks are accessible, inclusive and valued
- Build a progressive Library Service with a commitment to assisting those communities and individuals most impacted by Covid-19
- Refresh the delivery model of the Integrated Wellbeing Service to improve health and wellbeing
- Promote increased participation in countywide walking and cycling



Innovative designs for future leisure provision

Living & Learning - Actions & Measuring Progress

Reduce food and fuel poverty

- Develop and kick start actions and interventions as part of a Food and Fuel Poverty Programme by March 2022

Develop the Northumberland Communities Together Model

- Refresh 6-month delivery plan.
- Track number of active Community Hubs

Tackling sexual violence, harassment and prejudice

- Reduction in safeguarding referrals from providers in relation to these areas

Progress delivery on planned sites for extra care housing

- Track number of extra care houses built.
- Dementia Strategic Plan in place, with a vision for Dementia village / care farm
- Track number of Homes for Life built

Develop and deliver the Domestic Violence Strategy

- Develop and deliver the Domestic Violence Strategy
- Achieve White Ribbon Accreditation

Develop 'Health in all Policies Approach'

- Develop the Council's Health in All Policies Action Plan



Improve education attainment

- Embed the work of the Education Strategy Board in The Education priorities for Northumberland.
- Year on year improvement in educational outcomes at all levels

Improve skills and education pathways

- Create and deliver a Skills Strategy for Northumberland.
- Increasing the % of yr 11 leavers who continue their studies in Northumberland

Review provision for SEND students

- Co-produce and launch a Preparation for Adulthood Northumberland model
- Establish a place planning routine and cycle for SEND
- Identify and support local solutions for our Children and YP with SEND.

Deliver school builds

- Delivery of school builds at Berwick, Seaton Valley Federation, James Calvert Spence.

Raise Corporate Parenting awareness

- Increased offer of housing, apprenticeships and leisure opportunities
- All Council Services to have a Corporate Parenting commitment in place

Increase the number of skilled Social Care staff

- Track numbers of SC staff - NCC and agency
- % staff turnover within the social work workforce
- % of social workers where caseload weighting is within desired points level



Living & Learning - Actions & Measuring Progress

Provide high-quality leisure and sport

- Deliver fitness membership growth
- Achieve fitness membership retention rate of 43.5%
- Achieve leisure centre usage numbers of 1,589,424
- Achieve leisure centre membership visits of 888,754
- Achieve museum engagement numbers of 87,421
- Achieve Number of 'learn to swim' participants of 46,503
- Achieve number of new memberships of 7,837
- Achieve 'pay as you go' visits of 357,803
- Achieve theatre engagement of 246,008
- Increase number of engagements with BAIT arts programme
- Support ongoing recovery of tourist visitor numbers

Work with tourism and culture partners

- Create the Tourism and Culture Partner strategy by March 2022 and develop measures

Ensuring an active lifestyle

- 75% of users very/fairly satisfied with sports pitches (annual user satisfaction survey).
- 75% of users very/fairly satisfied with country parks (annual user satisfaction survey).

Refresh the model of Integrated Wellbeing Service

- Integrated Wellbeing Service model refreshed by March 2022

Build a progressive library service

- Achieve Library Service issues (non digital) of 250,000
- Achieve Library Service issues (digital) of 175,200
- Achieve Library Service new members of 9,996
- Achieve number of visits to the 'my library' website of 45,000

Increase participation in countywide walking and cycling

- 2,800 children to receive Bikeability training per year
- 4,500 children to take part in Bike Week (June each year)
- 4,000 children taking part in Walk to School month (October each year)

7 Enjoying & Connecting

We will maintain, protect and enhance the environment, prioritising our commitments on Climate Change. We will deliver high-quality services in all our communities and secure investment in housing and transport across the county.

We are committed to ensuring our residents live in distinctive vibrant places, which they value and feel proud of. We continue to maintain the high standards of our local services, and we are committed to looking for ways to improve these. Whether we are emptying the bins, filling potholes or cutting roadside verges, residents can be sure we care about keeping the county's streets and roads clean, tidy and safe.

We also **value the quality of the wider environment**. Northumberland is blessed with stunning countryside and coastline, with a host of world-renowned cultural and heritage assets, and home to a network of towns and villages - each with their own unique characteristics. We are **committed to improving and protecting these places**.

We know this means planning for new development, maintaining the vibrancy of our town centres, and sustaining and improving essential local facilities and attractions. Our new Local Plan provides an overarching framework for this. However, this is also reliant on people getting actively involved in their local

communities which we encourage and support. The ongoing adoption of neighbourhood plans for towns and villages is clear evidence of active engagement and involvement in communities.

Our Local Area Councils, now established, are also helping people to get involved in their local places and we are looking at ways to further develop models for local-decision making.

Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) works in collaboration with a number of key partners. Most recently, collaboration has included; Action for Children, Alzheimer's Society, Barnardo's, Communities Together, Delirium Specialist, Early Help Early Intervention Team, Health Improvement Service, Integrated Children's Centres, Integrated Wellbeing Service, Northumberland Recovery Partnership, Northumbria Healthcare, Smoking Cessation Service and Telecare to develop its Safe and Wellbeing Policy and delivery model. The Safe and Wellbeing programme represents NFRS' largest single prevention programme and is premised on the philosophy of Making Every Contact Count (MECC).



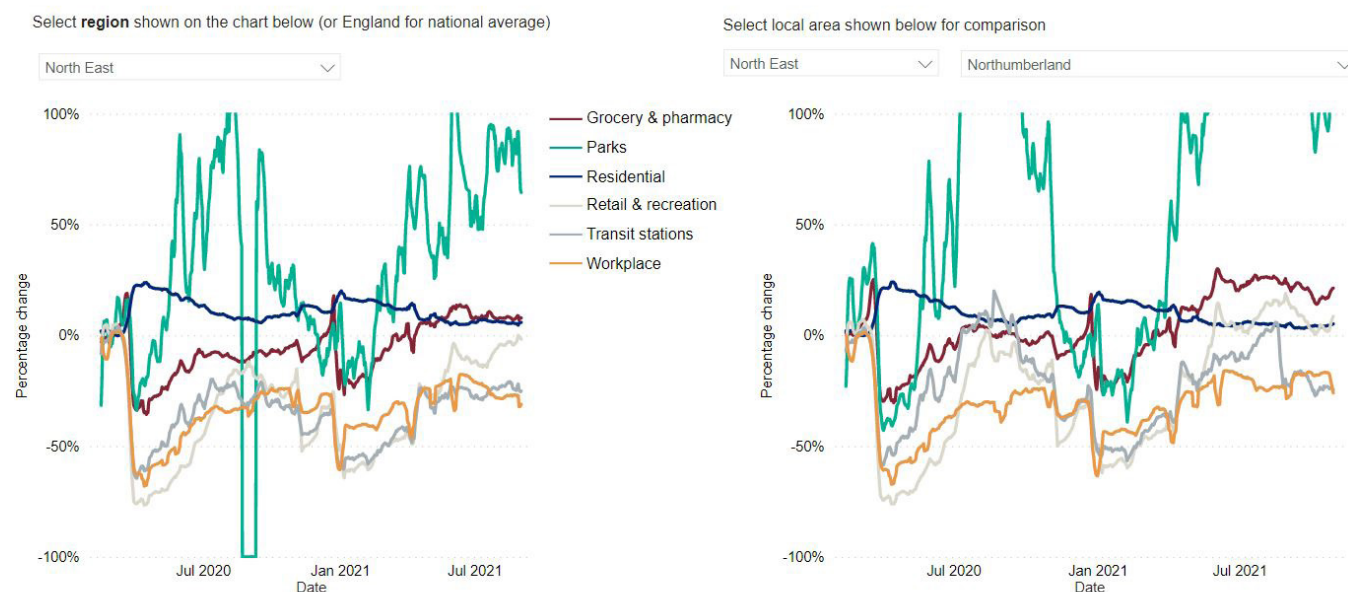
Enjoying & Connecting - Achievements

- The works at Druridge Bay Country Park have been completed and the new 20 pitch touring camping and caravan area within the park will be opening in the autumn, with strong interest already being expressed in the facility from various camping and motorhome touring organisations. This builds on the earlier investments in the expansion of the cafe and visitor centre and new children's play area – which are both proving very popular.
- Funding has been agreed to support the provision of a new major play area at the southern end of Newbiggin Bay in partnership with the Town Council.
- Despite the challenges to our Local Transport Plan programme presented by Covid, progress has generally been good and the surface dressing and micro-surfacing works programmes are now completed for the year and resurfacing and footway improvement schemes all well underway. We are also continuing with the 2nd year of the £15m investment in U&C (minor) roads and footways.
- We continue to make good progress with our car park action plans. The Council has already invested heavily to provide an excellent public Electric Vehicle Charging Points network – with 56 individual chargers and 111 charging bays already in operation and £500k funding allocated to enhance this further – with another 17 locations (34 bays) in the pipeline of projects.
- As part of our continued Covid response the temporary enhanced cleansing of all public conveniences will continue until at least March 2022 and for a second consecutive year we will keep all public conveniences open during this winter.
- Road safety remains important and a number of highway improvements have been implemented since April 2021 to improve safety for all road users. Work also continues to progress on many planned improvements for pedestrians and cyclists across the county, including new footways, pedestrian/ toucan crossings and bus stop access improvements. 20mph limits at schools have been fully introduced at five new locations, with a further seven being issued for programming for delivery on site. A further 20 schemes are currently being developed in discussion with Councillors or Town / Parish Councils.



Road maintenance work

Enjoying & Connecting - Key Trends

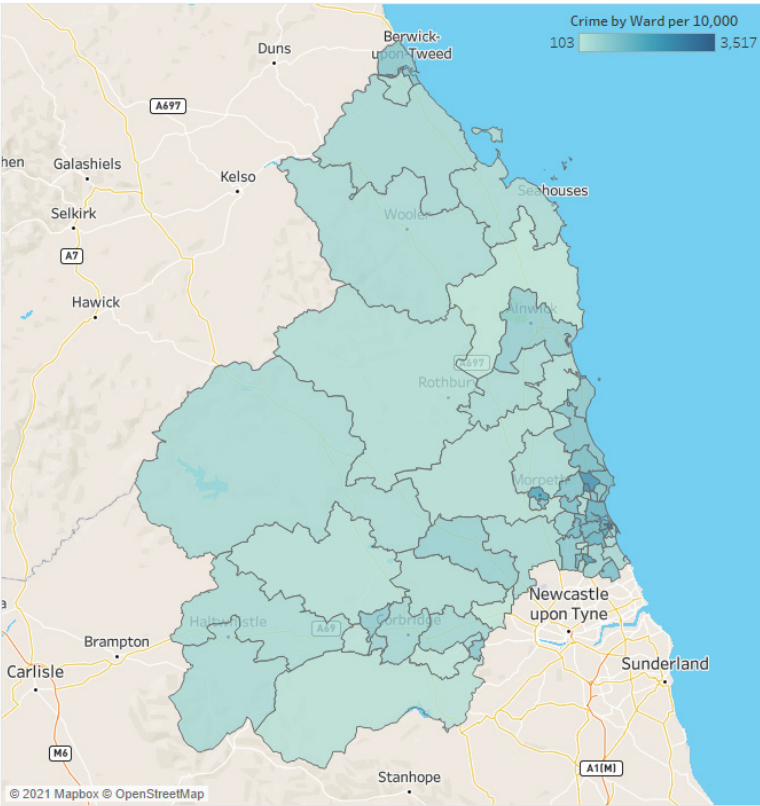


Mobility data suggests, as we recover from Covid, residents and visitors want to visit our parks and open spaces now more than ever.

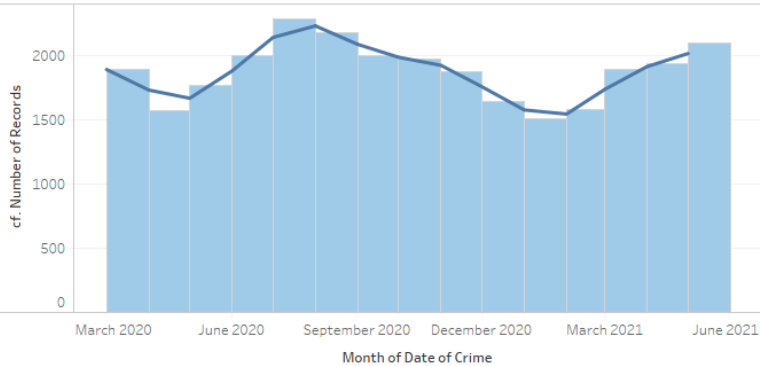


Higher visitor numbers predicted post-covid

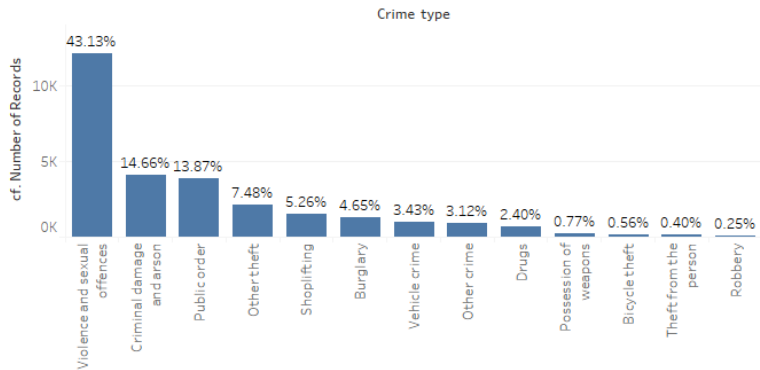
Crime by Ward - COVID



Timeline of Crime - COVID



Type of Crime - COVID



Our most deprived neighbourhoods continue to experience higher levels of crime compared to the least deprived areas.

The pattern of overall crime during the covid pandemic appears to reflect the lockdown periods - ie. lower crime during lockdowns, rising as restrictions were eased.

Enjoying & Connecting - Priorities

- Deliver improved maintenance and investment in our roads, walkways and cycle paths, with an enhanced programme for 'U & C' roads, walking and cycling
- Increase recycling rates
- Invest in our parks, country parks and open-spaces to support health improvement, tourism and biodiversity
- Work with Town & Parish councils and communities to maintain our high environmental standards, whilst tackling hotspots for street cleanliness and fly-tipping
- Improve road safety, reducing the number of people killed or seriously injured on our roads
- Support local economies through our programme of providing additional town centre car parking and investment to improve public conveniences

- Ensure our communities remain safe places for everyone to enjoy and tackle hotspots for crime and fear of crime
- Bring forward a plan for delivering, in partnership with all sectors, new, affordable homes across the county
- Undertake a review of the new Local Plan to ensure this supports our ambitions for economic growth across Northumberland
- Carry on the improvement of our Planning Function, enhancing accessibility and responsiveness of the service
- Deliver high standards of performance in all our community and regulatory services
- Deliver highly effective and efficient Fire & Rescue Service



Fire and Rescue Service

Enjoying & Connecting - Actions & Measuring Progress

Deliver improved maintenance and investment in our roads

- Measure level of investment in roads.
- Measure level of investment in footways and cycle paths.

Maintain high environmental standards

- % of sites falling below cleanliness standard for Detritus – 8%
- % of sites falling below cleanliness standard for Dog Fouling – 4%
- % of sites falling below cleanliness standard for Litter – 5%
- Proportion of fly-tips removed from public areas within 3 days – 90%

Invest in our parks, country parks and open spaces

- Measure investment in parks, country parks and open spaces

Northumberland is blessed with stunning countryside and coastline. We are committed to improving and protecting these places.

Increase recycling rates

- Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting – 36%
- Percentage of recycling, reuse, and composting at Household Waste Recovery Centres – 68.6%

Improve road safety

- Reduce the number of child casualties (including killed, serious and slight) in road traffic collisions
- Reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents

Provide additional town-centre parking and improve public conveniences

- Measure number of additional car parking spaces available
- Measure number of public conveniences that have undergone improvements and/or had all backlog maintenance issues resolved under the public convenience's capital improvement programme



Caring for our county

Ensure our communities remain safe

- To produce a Strategic Intelligence Assessment and develop a strategy to respond to identified priorities by June 2022 .
- To facilitate the Safer Northumberland Partnership, including a minimum of four meetings/year.
- To develop and support opportunities to work in partnership with others to tackle ASB and crime and disorder.

Plan for new, affordable housing

- Create the affordable home building strategy by March 2022

Review the new local plan

- Create a revised local plan with measures

Deliver high standards of performance

- Measure against operational KPIs across a range of community services

Improve our planning function

- % Major and County Matter applications determined within 13 weeks/ agreed timescale – 75%
- % new houses granted planning permission that are affordable homes – 17%
- % of all planning decisions overturned on appeal – 5%
- % of minor planning applications determined within 8 weeks – 75%
- % of other planning applications determined within 8 weeks – 85%
- Net additional homes provided - 651
- Net affordable homes provided (pa) - 374

Deliver a highly effective and efficient Fire & Rescue Service

- Strengthened governance through the introduction of a Performance Assurance Framework and Strategic Performance Board by March 2022
- Reduce the total number of Accidental Dwelling fires - measured using Statistical Process Control (SPC)

Deliver a highly effective and efficient Fire & Rescue Service

- Strengthened governance through the introduction of a Performance Assurance Framework and Strategic Performance Board by March 2022
- Reduce the total number of Accidental Dwelling fires - measured using Statistical Process Control (SPC)
- Reduce the total number of Deliberate Primary Fires - measured using SPC
- Reduce the total number of fires in non-domestic premises - measured using SPC
- Total number of fire safety audits to high risk premises - 100%
- Number of annual targeted safe and wellbeing visits - 4,000



