

POLICY DIGEST, September 2017

This digest presents a summary of the latest policy developments at a national and regional level of strategic relevance to Northumberland and highlights Government announcements of relevance to local government. This issue covers period from Monday 4 September to Friday 29 September. Previous and subsequent editions are available at www.northumberland.gov.uk/policy.

| Policy Development | Action | Lead |
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| PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY | | |
| <p>The local vantage: how views of local government finance vary across councils</p> <p>Local government finance in England in the 2010s can be characterised by two major trends: large (albeit varying) cuts to council budgets; and a shift from centralised redistribution of funding towards a greater emphasis on fiscal incentives for revenue growth, most notably via the introduction and potential extension of the business rates retention scheme (BRRS). It is in this context that this report, jointly written by researchers at the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS), the Local Government Information Unit (LGIU) and PwC, looks at how the views of council's' decision-makers relate to the characteristics of the councils they represent or work for. In particular, we focus on views in two key areas: the quality of service provision; and the impact and design of the BRRS. Such an analysis allows us to examine whether perceptions of two key issues differ systematically between areas with different financial, political and socio-economic characteristics.</p> <p>https://www.lgiu.org.uk/report/the-local-vantage-how-views-of-local-government-finance-vary-across-councils/</p> | For information | Alison Elsdon, Director of Corporate Resources |
| <p>Local government finance settlement 2018 to 2019: technical consultation (14 September 2017)</p> <p>The consultation paper sets out the government's intended approach for the third year of the multi-year local government finance settlement. The consultation closes on 26 October 2017.</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/local-government-finance-settlement-2018-to-2019-technical-consultatio n</p> | Officers to consider feeding into the consultation | Alison Elsdon, Director of Corporate Resources |

| PLACE SHAPING | | |
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| <p>Routes unveiled for A1 dualling (5 September 2017)</p> <p>Highways England held a public consultation on the options for dualling the A1 which finished on 23 December 2016. Since then, all the feedback received has been reviewed. The options assessment work to determine the preferred route has also been completed. Feedback received at the consultation, along with safety, economic and environmental analysis, has informed the decision on the preferred route which have been identified as the Green route option between Morpeth and Felton and the Orange route option Alnwick and Ellingham.</p> <p>http://roads.highways.gov.uk/projects/morpeth-to-ellingham-dualling/</p> | For information | Geoff Paul, Director of Planning and Economy |
| <p>New planning approach to speed up delivering homes (14 September 2017)</p> <p>An innovative approach to planning new homes will ensure they're built where most needed, save councils millions of pounds every year and help deliver more affordable homes, the Communities Secretary Sajid Javid has announced. The new approach, first mooted in the government's housing white paper, will help give a realistic picture of how many homes each local area needs now and in future years. It will also mean more homes are built in areas where it is unaffordable, based on average earnings in each area. Councils across England spend an estimated £3 million in taxpayers' money every year on employing expensive consultants to work out how many new homes are needed in their area. Long legal disputes over these figures when preparing local plans can also lead to unnecessary delays and add to the costs. The proposed changes will help boost housing supply and improve affordability. It will help ensure councils work to a consistent approach to plan for more homes in the right places. This is a crucial step in fixing the country's broken housing market.</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-planning-approach-to-speed-up-delivering-homes</p> | For information | Geoff Paul, Director of Planning and Economy |
| <p>£22.8 million boost to give power back to communities (20 September 2017)</p> <p>Communities across England are set to benefit from a package of support worth £22.8 million to help them develop plans to give them a real say in the development of their area. Housing Minister Alok Sharma confirmed how the cash boost will support communities, help build more homes and give locals more say over growth in their area. The funding, which will be around £5.5 million per year until 2022, will provide communities with specialist support to help develop a Neighbourhood Plan. Neighbourhood Plans gives local communities a real say in the development of their area including where homes, shops, green spaces and offices should be built and how they should look. The announcement comes as more than 400 successful neighbourhood planning referendums have now taken place across England, driving local growth from Cornwall to Northumberland.</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/government/news/228-million-boost-to-give-power-back-to-communities</p> | For information | Geoff Paul, Director of Planning and Economy |

| ECONOMIC PROSPERITY | | |
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| <p>Six areas to pilot UK's fastest broadband as part of £200 million project (3 September 2017)</p> <p>The first stage of a £200 million scheme to help bring the UK's fastest and most reliable broadband to businesses, schools and hospitals kicks off with the launch of six local pilots. The projects will get around £10 million to test innovative ways of connecting offices and public sector buildings with the next generation of broadband - full fibre networks that run fibre connections straight to the doors of customers' homes or businesses. The result is an incredibly reliable connection that can offer speeds of 1 Gigabit (1,000 Mbps.) The multimillion-pound investment means test projects will now go ahead in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire, West Sussex, Coventry and Warwickshire, Bristol and Bath & North East Somerset, West Yorkshire and Greater Manchester. This announcement is part of the government's four-year plan to stimulate the market and encourage the growth of full fibre up and down the country.</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/government/news/six-areas-to-pilot-uks-fastest-broadband-as-part-of-200-million-project</p> | For information | Alison Elsdon, Director of Corporate Services |
| <p>£40 million to create jobs and boost visitors to the Great British Coast (4 September 2017)</p> <p>Towns and cities along Britain's coastline are set to benefit from thousands of new jobs and millions of pounds more in visitor spending after the government announced the next round of the Coastal Communities Fund. Coastal Communities Minister Jake Berry confirmed that the fifth round of funding for 2019 to 2021 will provide at least £40 million to help coastal areas in England further transform their economies and boost jobs in their local area. It will be open for applications in early 2018. The government has already provided £170 million for 278 projects around the country since the Coastal Communities Fund was launched in 2012. This has resulted in 2 million more people visiting the coast and spending an additional £171 million. This has already helped to start 485 new businesses and create 5,569 jobs - with these figures set to almost triple once the first 3 rounds of projects have been completed.</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/government/news/40-million-to-create-jobs-and-boost-visitors-to-the-great-british-coast</p> | For information | Geoff Paul, Director of Planning and Economy |
| <p>Chancellor to meet Metro Mayors and visit key infrastructure in the North (4 September 2017)</p> <p>Philip Hammond convened the government's first meeting with all three Metro Mayors from the North of England, to discuss boosting growth across the Northern Powerhouse regions. Boosting productivity in the region will be top of the agenda when he meets Manchester Mayor Andy Burnham, Steve Rotherham, Mayor of the Liverpool City Region, and the Tees Valley Mayor Ben Houchen. These three areas alone have a population of five million and combined economy worth more than £102 billion. Employment across the Northern Powerhouse is currently at a record high (73.8%), but Ministers believe more needs to be done to tackle the productivity gap. The government will continue to support the region through devolution and investment - including record amounts in transport, alongside support for skills and innovation. Ministers will shortly be announcing further funding to improve roads right across the North. The Chancellor is clear the Northern Powerhouse will have a key role in the Industrial Strategy and efforts to ensure Britain makes the most of the opportunities ahead as we leave the European Union.</p> | For information | Geoff Paul, Director of Planning and Economy |

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| https://www.gov.uk/government/news/chancellor-to-meet-metro-mayors-and-visit-key-infrastructure-in-the-north | | |
| <p>The Great British Broadband Boost (9 September 2017)</p> <p>The success of the Government's superfast broadband rollout programme means that a total of up to £645m is to be made available over the coming years to help take superfast broadband to the most remote and hard to reach places in the UK, it was announced today by Minister for Digital Matt Hancock. Together with other planned delivery, it is estimated that this could see more than 900,000 extra UK homes and businesses gain access to superfast speeds after the end of this year, taking superfast coverage to 98 per cent of the nation over the next few years.</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/government/news/the-great-british-broadband-boost</p> | For information | Alison Elsdon, Director of Corporate Services |
| <p>Living on the edge: Britain's coastal communities</p> <p>Economic and social deprivation in seaside communities has been much talked about in recent years. There has been a widespread belief that the economies of coastal towns have performed poorly relative to the rest of the country, with a lack of well-paid job opportunities for people in these areas. Many point to structural, long-standing economic and social problems following the decline of domestic tourism in the UK. Some also point to the fact that many coastal communities are poorly connected to major employment centres in the UK, which compounds the difficulties faced by residents in these areas. Not only do they lack local job opportunities, but travelling elsewhere for work is also relatively difficult. Much of the discussion around coastal towns has, however, been anecdotal rather than grounded in facts and figures. This partly reflects the fact that there is no official definition of a "coastal community" or "seaside resort", and as such there is little collated data on this. The Social Market Foundation has undertaken a brief analysis of economic and social data at a local authority level, to better understand the extent to which coastal communities are among the worst ranked parts of the country in terms of earnings, employment, health and education. A coastal community is defined as a local authority with coastal borders.</p> <p>http://www.smf.co.uk/publications/living-edge-britains-coastal-communities/</p> | For information | Geoff Paul, Director of Economy and Planning |
| <p>A Northern Energy Strategy</p> <p>The Northern Energy Taskforce came together, through the auspices of IPPR North, with the belief that the energy sector should continue to be a fundamental strength of the economy of the North; not only continuing to power the nation in its low carbon future, but in innovation and demand management. Above all, in a region where fuel poverty is all too evident, the North can develop an energy system which meets the needs of all consumers, resolving the so-called "trilemma" of low carbon supply, security and price. A year and three reports later, that belief has hardened into conviction. On this basis, its vision is that by 2050 the north of England will be the leading low-carbon energy region in the UK, with an energy economy worth £15 billion per annum and 100,000 green jobs providing affordable, clean energy for people and businesses across the North. This Strategy is a road map for how we can achieve this. It contains recommendations for national, regional and local stakeholders, including the formation of Energy for the North.</p> | For information | |

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| https://www.ippr.org/research/publications/northern-energy-strategy | | |
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| <p>Powerhouse 2050: The North’s Routemap for Productivity</p> <p>Powering Leeds with hydrogen, investing over £1bn in portable nuclear reactors and leading the way on the Internet of Things – just three ways the North can become £100bn more productive, according to this report from the independent Northern Powerhouse Partnership. It sets out sets out fully costed, evidence-based proposals for four areas of Northern excellence which could, with government funding and business support, rival the best countries and regions in the world.</p> <p>Months of research, workshops and engagement with more than 500 business of all sizes, universities, interest groups and many others by the Northern Powerhouse Partnership (NPP) revealed the steps needed to be taken to make the North’s prime capabilities – Advanced Manufacturing & Materials, Energy, Digital and Health Innovation – world-class.</p> <p>http://www.northernpowerhousepartnership.co.uk/publications/powerhouse-2050-transforming-the-north/</p> | For information | Geoff Paul, Director of Economy and Planning |
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| CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE | | |
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| <p>Fairer funding system to end 'postcode lottery' for schools (14 September 2017)</p> <p>Education Secretary Justine Greening has confirmed details of a new fairer funding system for schools in England, putting an end to the historic postcode lottery that saw huge differences in funding between similar schools in different parts of the country. The National Funding Formula (NFF), the biggest improvement to the school funding system for decades, will ensure that for the first time funding is based on the individual needs and characteristics of every school in the country. The publication of the final NFF for 2018-19 and 2019-20 in Parliament follows two major consultations, generating more than 26,000 responses, and the Education Secretary’s announcement in July of an additional £1.3billion boost to the front line school's budget. The NFF will provide funding gains for schools across England, allocating: an increase in the basic amount allocated for every pupil; a minimum per pupil funding level for both secondaries and primaries to target the lowest funded schools; a minimum cash increase for every school of one per cent per pupil by 2019-20, with the most underfunded schools seeing rises of three per cent per pupil in 2018-19 and 2019-20; and a £110,000 lump sum for every school to help with fixed costs, and an additional £26million to rural and isolated schools to help them manage their unique challenges.</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/government/news/fairer-funding-system-to-end-postcode-lottery-for-schools</p> | For information | Andy Johnson, Director of Education and Skills |
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NORTHUMBERLAND

Northumberland County Council

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within the Planning and Economy Directorate
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