

POLICY DIGEST, August 2015

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 3 August to Friday 28 August. Previous and subsequent editions are available at www.northumberland.gov.uk/policy.

Policy Development	Action	Lead
PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY		
<p>Making change possible: a Transformation Fund for the NHS</p> <p>The Health Foundation and The King's Fund both support the concept of a Transformation Fund for the NHS in England. The two organisations came together to undertake a programme of work detailing the key aspects of such a fund. This report draws on analysis conducted by the two organisations, in particular six case studies of funding transformation, in the health sector and beyond, along with examples of local NHS initiatives. It also captures the experience of NHS leaders and some of those organisations across the NHS that have been at the forefront of efforts to implement changes in the delivery of care.</p> <p>http://www.health.org.uk/publication/making-change-possible-transformation-fund-nhs</p>	For information	
<p>The future of primary care: creating teams for tomorrow</p> <p>The Secretary of State for Health, Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP, commissioned Health Education England to establish the independent Primary Care Workforce Commission, chaired by Martin Roland CBE. Through a literature review, call for evidence, site visits and panel meetings, the Commission wanted to identify and highlight innovative models of primary care that will meet the future needs of patients and the NHS. This report sets out the Commission's thinking which includes calling for greater collaboration across organisations and a broader range of staff involved in the delivery of healthcare.</p> <p>http://hee.nhs.uk/work-programmes/primary-and-community-care-programme/primary-care-workforce-commission/</p>	For information	

PLACE SHAPING		
<p>Targeting flood investment and policy to minimise flood disadvantage</p> <p>This report from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation outlines the relationship between exposure to flooding and social vulnerability and how this creates flood disadvantage for particular parts of England. It sets out how flood investment could be targeted more effectively to support the communities that may be most disadvantaged by flooding in England and recommends how the wider national policy framework could better address underlying social vulnerability in order to increase flood resilience.</p> <p>https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/targeting-flood-investment-and-policy-minimise-flood-disadvantage</p>	For information	David Laux, Head of Technical Services
<p>£26 million flood scheme unveiled to protect tourist town (24 August 2015)</p> <p>A well-known tourist destination in Northumberland, affected by flooding in 2008, will benefit from an innovative £26 million scheme. The Morpeth flood scheme will protect residents by storing millions of gallons of flood water upstream - one of the largest projects of its kind built by the Environment Agency. It will benefit more than 1,000 homes and businesses in the town and is the largest flood protection project completed in the North East. The upstream reservoir on the town's Mitford Estate works by storing up to 1.4 million cubic metres of water when river levels are high – enough to fill more than 560 Olympic-sized swimming pools. The scheme has also created 17 hectares of new habitat for local wildlife. 3,500 endangered white-clawed crayfish have been relocated upstream of the River Wansbeck – one of the last places in the UK where the native species has a stronghold. Construction has allowed for 'refuges' and continued habitat to ensure the crayfish will continue to thrive. The project has been jointly delivered with Northumberland County Council, which provided £12 million in funding – one of the largest partnership contributions the Environment Agency has secured.</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/government/news/26-million-flood-scheme-unveiled-to-protect-tourist-town</p>	For information	David Laux, Head of Technical Services
ECONOMIC PROSPERITY		
<p>Local areas get their say on Sunday trading (5 August 2015)</p> <p>The government has launched a consultation on plans to give local areas the power to allow large shops to open for longer on Sundays. The reforms would give metro mayors and local authorities the power to determine Sunday trading rules that reflect the needs of local people and allow shops and high streets to stay open longer and compete with online retailers. Local authorities would have the discretion to zone which part of their local authority area would benefit from the longer hours, allowing them to boost town centres and high streets. The consultation will look at 2 proposals on devolving Sunday trading, devolving powers on Sunday trading law to elected metro mayors and / or local authorities. Government is calling for businesses, shoppers and other interested groups to respond to the consultation on the proposed changes. The consultation is open until 6 September 2015 and applies to England and Wales.</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/government/news/local-areas-get-their-say-on-sunday-trading</p>	Officers to consider feeding comments into the consultation	Phil Soderquest, Head of Public Protection

<p>Millions available to help small businesses reach their full potential (6 August 2015)</p> <p>For the first time European Regional Development funds are targeted at Local Enterprise Partnership areas in a major shift to more localised spending. Local organisations working with small firms will now be able to apply for a share of funding from the latest round of the European Regional Development Fund. The funding will support innovation, boost businesses and create jobs across local economies and bring economic benefits to the wider area that will be felt beyond the area's boundaries. Across the country Local Enterprise Partnerships and other local partners will play a key role in shaping how the money is allocated and invested. Around the country a total of £5 billion is being made available from the 2014 to 2020 round of the European Regional Development Fund and the European Social Fund to fund local projects. The new programme is built from the local priorities of England's 39 Local Enterprise Partnership areas who know best what is needed to boost growth locally. All funding decisions will be taken within this framework. The main priorities of the European Regional Development Fund programme are research and innovation, supporting and promoting small to medium sized enterprises and the creation of a low carbon economy.</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/government/news/millions-available-to-help-small-businesses-reach-their-full-potential</p>	For information	Geoff Paul, Director of Planning, Economy and Housing
<p>Government boost for Northern Powerhouse (11 August 2015)</p> <p>The Government has unveiled a blueprint for how £13 billion of government investment in transport will help create the Northern Powerhouse. The Northern Powerhouse is a one-nation drive to close the economic gap between north and south by helping the region unleash its full power and create a balanced, healthier economy. Making transport better by improving the links that bind the north together is integral to this enterprise. It will bring cities and regions closer together and strengthen connections - Liverpool to Hull, the north west to Yorkshire, the north east and the Midlands – making it easier for hard working people and businesses to access markets or deploy their skills. The blueprint shows how transport links across the north are being transformed by government investment.</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-boost-for-northern-powerhouse</p>	For information	Geoff Paul, Director of Planning, Economy and Housing
<p>Towards a one nation economy: A 10-point plan for boosting rural productivity (20 August 2015)</p> <p>This document sets out a 10-point plan that the government will put into action to increase productivity growth in England's rural areas. The actions are organised around five areas considered to reflect the key priorities for rural areas: rural areas fully connected to the wider economy; a highly skilled rural workforce; strong conditions for rural business growth; easier to live and work in rural areas; and greater local control.</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/towards-a-one-nation-economy-a-10-point-plan-for-boosting-rural-productivity</p>	For information	Geoff Paul, Director of Planning, Economy and Housing

<p>Apprenticeships levy: employer owned apprenticeships training (21 August 2015)</p> <p>The Government is inviting comments on its proposal to introduce an apprenticeship levy. The levy will enable employers to choose and pay for apprenticeship training. They are seeking your views on: how to pay the levy; how the levy should work for employers who operate across the whole of the UK; how to make sure that employers paying the levy have the opportunity to get more out than they put in; and how best to give employers control of apprenticeships. This consultation covers the implementation of the levy. More detail on the levy rate and scope will be provided later in the year. The consultation closes on 2 October 2015.</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/apprenticeships-levy-employer-owned-apprenticeships-training</p>	<p>Officers to consider feeding comments into the consultation</p>	<p>Geoff Paul, Director of Planning, Economy and Housing</p>
--	--	--

<p>HEALTH & WELLBEING</p>		
<p>Fairness Commissions</p> <p>With many local authorities are struggling to tackle growing levels of inequality and poverty, this report from the New Economic Foundation explores the scope for Fairness Commissions to come up with solutions after talking to local people. It recommends that local authorities run participative processes focusing on inequality and poverty, and apply the most effective approaches and innovations from existing commissions to their local areas. It also suggests that there is scope for commissions to be held across larger areas to develop recommendations for regional institutions. By linking up regionally, local authorities have shown that they can speak with a louder, collective voice nationally. This can be used to make a stronger case for national government action on issues such as good job creation, private rentals standards, social housing, and the cost of credit.</p> <p>http://www.neweconomics.org/publications/entry/fairness-commissions</p>	<p>For information</p>	
<p>Five million people at high risk of Type 2 diabetes (26 August 2015)</p> <p>Five million people in England have blood sugar levels indicating a high risk of developing Type 2 diabetes, according to a new report published today by Public Health England (PHE). This report provides the most accurate and robust estimate of how many people over 16 in England have blood sugar levels in a range indicating a high risk of developing Type 2 diabetes, otherwise known as non-diabetic hyperglycaemia. The new estimate further underlines the need to act on Type 2 diabetes, especially as it already results in 22,000 early deaths and costs the NHS £8.8billion every year.</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/government/news/five-million-people-at-high-risk-of-type-2-diabetes</p>	<p>For information</p>	<p>Penny Spring, Director of Public Health</p>

STRONGER COMMUNITIES		
<p>A new strategy for sport: consultation (31 July 2015)</p> <p>The government is developing a new strategy for sport. This consultation invites views on the following ten themes: Participation; Physical activity; Children and young people; Financial sustainability; Coaching, workforce and good governance; Elite and professional sport; Infrastructure; Fairness and equality; Safety and wellbeing; and International influence and major sporting events. The closing date for comments is 2 October 2015.</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/a-new-strategy-for-sport-consultation</p>	<p>Officers to consider feeding comments into the consultation</p>	<p>Bruce Ledger, Chief Executive of Active Northumberland</p>



***Policy Digest* is produced on 4 to 6 weekly cycle by the Council's Economic and Inclusion Policy Team within the Planning, Economy and Housing Directorate**
All issues are available at www.northumberland.gov.uk/policy