

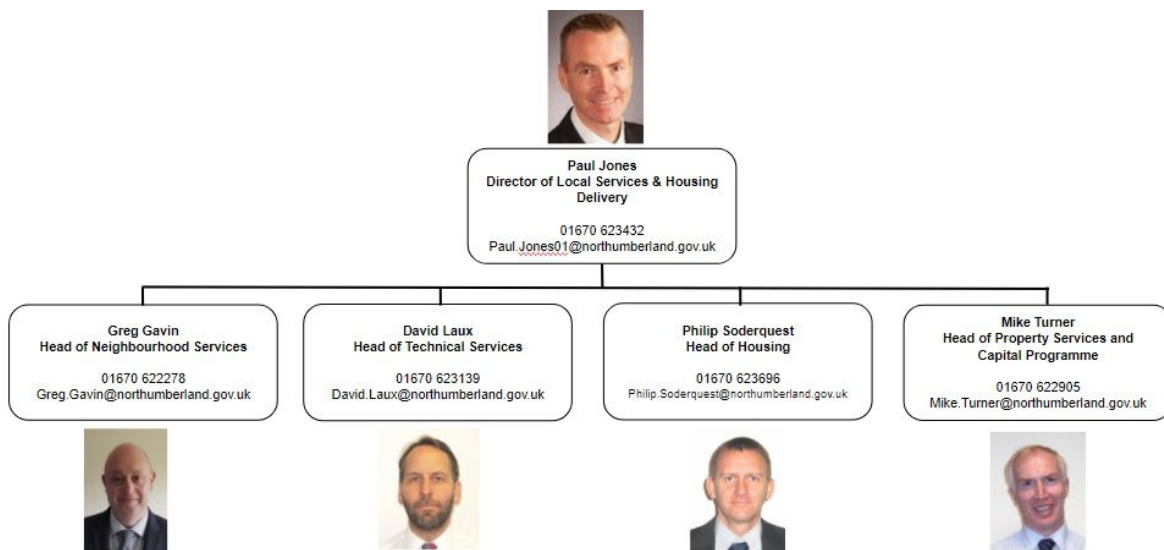
Northumberland County Council

LOCAL SERVICES AND HOUSING DELIVERY Equality Information Analysis

1. What are the directorate's key functions and services?

The Local Services and Housing Delivery Senior Management Structure

Local Services and Housing delivery covers four key service delivery areas, Neighbourhood Services, Technical Services, Housing and Property Services and Capital Programme. The following organisation chart shows the Local Services and Housing Delivery senior management team and areas of responsibility:



NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

- Refuse collection and recycling service
- Bulky waste, hazardous household waste, garden and commercial waste collection services
- Household Waste Recovery Centres (HWRCs)
- Abandoned vehicles
- PFI contract
- Waste management
- Closed landfill sites aftercare
- Waste education and awareness
- Winter maintenance (support)
- Flooding and extreme weather support
- Street cleansing
- Grounds maintenance
- Parks and urban open spaces

- Countryside and Public Rights of Way maintenance, management and enforcement
- Cemeteries and Crematoria
- Markets
- Public conveniences
- Fleet management
- Security and NCC postal courier service

PROPERTY SERVICES AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME

- Capital Programme
- Corporate Landlord function
- Estate Management of the corporate property portfolio
- Acquisition and Disposal of Land and Buildings
- Provision and delivery of the Property Asset Management Plan
- Condition surveys of the corporate property portfolio
- Design and project management of property improvement schemes
- Building statutory maintenance, testing and inspection including third party engineering inspections
- Repairs and maintenance of council buildings
- Office Moves
- Housing Capital Programme
- Housing Asset Management
- Asbestos Management
- Caretaking and cleaning services

HOUSING SERVICES

- Housing Options and Homeless Service
- Private Sector Housing Initiatives
- Refugee and Asylum Seeker Service
- Policy & Strategy
- Management of Unauthorised Encampments
- Community-Led Housing
- Estate Management
- Gypsy Roma Traveller Service
- Homefinder Service
- Leaseholder Management
- Resident Involvement
- Right to Buy Management
- Tenancy Management
- Voids and Allocations Management
- Welfare and Advice Service
- Responsive Repairs and Maintenance Service
- Emergency Out of Hours Service
- Annual gas and solid fuel statutory testing
- Management of planned work programmes

TECHNICAL SERVICES

- Highways asset management
- Roads and bridges inspections
- Maintenance of roads, footways, cycleways, bridges and street lighting, including winter and severe weather response
- Network management, including parking and streetworks
- Design and project management of highway and transport improvement schemes
- Road safety training and casualty reduction schemes
- Highways Laboratory Services
- Highways Sign Shop
- Transport operations for schools and supported bus services
- Flood and coastal erosion risk management

2. What information does the group or service area have about people for each of the protected characteristics

Neighbourhood Services

Age

Northumberland country parks are well used by parents with young children and young children's play areas are provided and maintained by the Council at many of them. At some sites programmes of events aimed at younger children are also provided. Older people (post retirement) are regular users of the rights of way network, and countryside sites.

We know that 15% of the residents using bring facilities (waste and recycling points) are aged 65 and over, which is similar to the age profile of respondents to the kerbside collection questionnaire, a service delivered to every household in the County. This suggests that age does not restrict residents from using the bring sites. The age profile of respondents to the hazardous waste survey is quite different, with 46% of respondents being 65 and over which continues the trend from previous surveys.

Age	Age of respondents to survey (%)		
	Kerbside Collection Service	Bring sites	Hazardous Household Waste
16 - 24	0%	0%	0%
25 - 44	56%	33%	17%
45 - 64	36%	52%	37%
65 - 74	7%	11%	37%
75 - 84	2%	4%	8%
>85	0%	0%	1%

There are no current adverse impacts on young children but any service reductions impacting on the provision or maintenance of play areas or Countryside and Green Spaces events programmes would have an adverse impact on young children. Impacts on older people with regard to physical barriers are similar to those identified above under disabilities. Older people, although not considered to be disabled, often experience difficulty in using stiles where it is necessary to climb and lift a leg to cross over a fence or wall.

Waste Services are mostly relevant to adults, who as householders are responsible for dealing with the waste which is generated from those people living in the household. Householders are required to leave the wheeled bin at the kerbside ready for collection (unless otherwise agreed by the Council). The Council can collect additional items from the kerbside for which the resident pays a charge, such as bulky and garden waste. Bulky waste is to be left at the kerbside or on the resident's property (if it is likely to cause an obstruction), and garden waste containers placed at the kerbside by the resident. Some older residents may find manoeuvring the bin or the waste to the collection point physically challenging.

Residents may prefer to deliver their bulky waste free of charge to one of the 12 HWRCs provided by the Council. Again, it is likely that some older residents may find the physical demands of unloading the vehicle and depositing the waste difficult. However, the satisfaction of older residents with waste services is very similar to that of the general population, indicating that the measures we have in place meet the needs of this age group.

Service Area	All Responses	Over 65 years old
Alternate Weekly Bin Collection	81%	78%
HWRC's*	85%	90%

*Equality & diversity information was not collected during the 2017 survey, so 2016 information is inserted.

Disability

Waste Services

Annual online surveys are undertaken to assess our resident's satisfaction with waste services, such as kerbside collections and Household Waste Recovery Centres. Responses from the general population are compared with those from protected groups to identify the impacts services have.

Green Spaces and Countryside Team

For the Countryside Service, the main areas of concern relate to physical and environmental barriers to access to the countryside and the facilities provided to the public, and to the provision of information in a format that is accessible to people with visual, hearing or learning disability. No current information is available to indicate the level of demand by disabled people for the services provided by the Countryside team but there is no reason to believe that disabled people would be significantly less interested in enjoying the countryside than non-disabled people. Complaints from disabled people are very few, and none have been recorded over the last year, although previously enquiries were received from disabled residents wishing to attend public events.

Cemeteries and Crematoria

Where we provide a Cemetery or Crematorium we have made suitable adaptations to allow access for disabled users.

The key impacts on disabled people

Public Conveniences - disabled users have a right to access public conveniences and we must ensure that we have made adequate provision for them in terms of being able to safely access, use and exit these facilities. A review of public conveniences was undertaken in 2015, with the opening times of some facilities being reduced or closed. However, the introduction of the "You're Welcome" scheme which encourages local businesses to make their toilet facilities available to the public, has enhanced the quality of toilet provision and promoted greater social inclusion for older and disabled people. The scheme currently has 22 members Countywide who receive an annual payment in return for the use of their premises by the public. The council has published information on the location of toilets including those with facilities for disabled people on our website and indicates which facilities require a Radar key to access them.

Green Spaces and Countryside Team - wheelchair users and visually impaired people will find the vast majority of the public rights of way network inaccessible, with accessible paths limited to urban areas and specific wheelchair accessible paths constructed by the Council. The extent of wheelchair accessible paths in the County is not known but will represent a very small proportion of the total. The impacts on disabled and visually impaired people on the recreational sites managed by the Council are similar to those in the rights of way network but generally less severe, as fewer structures (stiles and gates) need to be negotiated, path surfaces are generally better, and signage and information is often provided. Information and public events may be less easily accessed by disabled people (see below).

Waste Service - the Council empties ~7.7 million wheeled bins per annum where

residents receive an alternate weekly collection of general waste and recycling. We know from the latest survey undertaken in 2017 that of the 185 respondents who completed the Equality and Diversity section of the questionnaire, 18% considered themselves to have a disability. Disabled residents level of satisfaction with waste services is similar to that of the general population:

Service Area	All Responses	Disabled responses
Alternate Weekly Bin Collection	81%	74%
HWRC's*	85%	92%
Bring Sites	65%	75%
Garden Waste Service	68%	50%
Bulky Waste Service	46%	40%

*Equality & diversity information was not collected during the 2017 survey, so 2016 information is inserted.

Satisfaction with the alternate weekly bin collections is lower than the general population. Areas of dissatisfaction includes the frequency of collections, limited range of recyclates and the location bins are returned to. The low number of responses from disabled residents to the garden waste and bulky waste surveys makes the results an unreliable indicator of customer opinion.

Gender Identity

Neighbourhood Services do not currently hold any information about gender identity. The Gender Identity Research and Education Society estimates about 1% of the British population are gender non conforming to some degree, and the number of trans males to females is about equal. There is no evidence to suggest that transsexual people or those with gender identity disorder are disproportionately advantaged or disadvantaged by the functions of Neighbourhood Services.

Pregnancy And Maternity

We do not currently hold any information about whether a user of our service is pregnant or breastfeeding. In Northumberland 5% of the population is likely to be pregnant.

We do have information of which members of our staff are pregnant, on maternity leave or have just returned from maternity leave and may still be breastfeeding. Policies are in place to protect these employees, and facilities are in place for nursing mothers in the workplace (private rest rooms).

Race

Interpretive literature and information about our services and events is only routinely provided in English unless requested otherwise. Information on our website is linked to an online translation service and has many different languages

available. Most residents accessing Neighbourhood Services' services are classed as "white" which is consistent with the County profile.

The percentage of white people in Northumberland (2011 Census) is 98%.

The key impacts on people from different racial groups are:

- Accessibility of information and public events to different racial, ethnic minority and national groups.
- The ethnicity of the respondents to the waste survey questionnaires are predominantly white which follows the racial profile of Northumberland, with the non-white groups marginally under represented.
- Potential indirect impact on the ability of non English speaking groups to access and enjoy our services, open spaces and the countryside.

Religion or belief

We do not currently hold data on the religions and beliefs of the users of our service but from 2011 Census data we know that 71% of the population of Northumberland surveyed declared a religion, 24% declared they had no Religion and the rest did not answer this question.

All users of our services should be treated equally regardless of their religions or beliefs, in order that unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation are eliminated. There is no evidence to suggest that persons of a certain religion or belief are disproportionately advantaged or disadvantaged by our services.

Sex

The gender profile of Northumberland's population is 49% male and 51% female. The gender profile of residents completing the annual waste satisfaction surveys is similar to Northumberland's gender profile. Anecdotal information suggests that in some areas and at some times of day women may be deterred from accessing the countryside due to the fear of crime while in a remote area out of sight of other people. This situation could be made worse by poor maintenance of paths, lack of control of overhanging vegetation, or the failure to take account of personal security concerns when creating or diverting paths. Likewise, we can assume that women may be concerned and reluctant to use our services such as accessing parks and open spaces, public conveniences, cemeteries and possibly quiet shopping areas due to the fear of crime or harm during hours of darkness or due to the unattended, remote location of the service. Very few complaints or issues of this type are reported.

Our services are provided equally to men and women, however:

- Women access and enjoy the countryside in some areas less than men, or at different times of day.
- Women may be dissuaded to use some elements of our service at some times of the day.
- Waste services are provided equally to both men and women. There is no evidence that the service has a disproportional impact on people of a particular gender.

- We provide information on our website about the location of baby changing facilities in public toilets to assist parents and carers.

Marriage And Civil Partnership (Employees)

We do not currently hold any information about whether our employees are married or in a civil partnership, however through the management process following approved HR policies all of our employees are treated equally in order that unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation are eliminated. There is no evidence to suggest that married employees or those in a civil partnership are disproportionately advantaged or disadvantaged whilst in our employment.

PROPERTY SERVICES AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME

No public information is held by Property Services

HOUSING

Management of Unauthorised Encampments

The Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Liaison Officer collates limited E&D statistics as the Ethnic group concerned are traditionally reserved about divulging personal information. All information is gathered through an assessment that looks at their social, health, education and welfare needs.

The assessments are carried out with any new unauthorised encampments in the County, and the information recorded is only what they are prepared to give therefore the numbers do not reflect a true picture of the number of people living in these groups.

From November 2016 to November 2017 the following E&D information was recorded:

GRT Service 01/11/2016 to 31/10/2017	Total
Adult Males	68
Adult Females	72
Child Male	52
Child Female	49
Pregnant Females	6
Non specified health conditions	7
Specified health conditions	3

Homelessness and Housing Options Service

The homelessness and housing options service gathers equality and diversity information and reports this to the Department of Communities and Local Government through the P1E reporting system.

The statistics for November 2016 to November 2017 show a total of 311 households made homeless applications to the Council. The figures can be broken down into the following categories: Ethnic origin, Gender, Age, Disability

The figures show that the majority of people who made a homeless application between 01/11/2016 to 31/10/2017 are female, white british between the ages of 25 -44. The number of applicants where there was dependent children in the household was 154 with an overall total of 329 children (those under 18 years of age). The statistics also collate information regarding mental and physical disability, however no applicants during this period stated that they had a disability.

Ethnic origin (as recorded on system)

Homeless Applicants 01/11/2016 to 31/10/2017 (Race)	Total	% of total
White British	296	95.5
White Other	7	2.1
African	1	0.3
Bangladeshi	1	0.3
Indian	2	0.6
Any other Asian background	2	0.6
Other Ethnic origin	1	0.3
Prefered not to say	1	0.3

The figures above tend to reflect the ethnicity statistics from the 2011 Northumberland Census. They show that 98.4% of the Northumberland population are white which compares to the homelessness stats which show that 97.6% of all applicants were recorded as being white. The homelessness figures for the rest of England show that 73.4% of all applicants were classed as white.

To assist people where English is not their first language and there may be difficulty in communication the services of an interpreter are employed to ensure that the client fully understands the processes of the homelessness application. The interpreter services have been used twice time during the specified period from 01/11/2016 to the 31/10/2017.

Gender

Homeless Applicants 01/11/2016 to 31/10/2017 (Gender)	Total	% of total
Female	203	65.3
Male	108	34.7

The figures on gender show that female applicants are significantly higher than male, however 46 (15%) of all applications are from couples with dependent children and within this group the lead applicant was female in 75% of the cases. When the couples with dependent children are removed the figures show that 170 applicants are female and 97 male. The main reason for homelessness where the applicant was female is domestic violence which accounts for 41% of all applications from females.

Age (as recorded on system)

Homeless Applicants 01/11/2016 to 31/10/2017 (Age)	Total	% of total
16-24	71	23
25-44	171	53
45-59	44	14
60-64	11	4
65-74	10	3
75 & over	3	1

Applicants who are aged under 18 years of age are automatically classed as vulnerable and as such would be given priority for housing and where deemed necessary would be provided with support to enable them to live independently or given a placement in supported accommodation.

The Council has four temporary accommodation units to accommodate households while their homelessness situation is being investigated. They cover the whole the county, three of which have partial disabled facilities. Across the County there is 1 fully adapted room, 3 rooms have access to a disabled bathroom facilities and 9 rooms which are fully accessible.

Asylum Seeker and Refugee Service

The Asylum Seeker and Refugee team became operational in September 2016 and since then they have supported 13 families, 12 from Syria and 1 from Iraq. A total of 60 people are being supported by the team. The families are assisted with every aspect of their lives to enable them to settle in a new country. Two disabled children have been found placements in special needs schools that meet their specific needs. Funding for this work is provided by a government grant.

Asylum Seeker and Refugee Service 01/11/2016 to 31/10/2017	Total
Families	13
Males	32
Females	28
Children with special needs	2
Pregnant females	2

Technical Services

NHT Survey

The NHT Public Satisfaction Survey collects public perspectives on, and satisfaction with, Highway and Transport Services in Local Authority areas.

It is a unique, standardised, collaboration between Highway Authorities across the UK enabling comparison, knowledge sharing, and the potential to improve efficiencies by the sharing of good practice. The NHT Survey is also referenced in the DfT's Incentive Fund Self-assessment process.

It gives participating Authorities:

- A better understanding of how they are performing in the eyes of their public
- A consistent datum for setting service levels and a means of measuring the impact of service improvements
- Access to the best performers and the opportunity to learn from the good practice of others
- Full transparency of data for benchmarking purposes

Within the survey are a number of questions related to accessibility for disabled users. i.e. Drop kerb crossing points, availability and reliability of community transport e.g. Dial a Ride or volunteer cars, ease of use by disabled people (footways). Confidentially and as part of this survey, we also ask residents to complete personal data about themselves i.e. Age, sex, nationality, employment status, are they a Blue Badge Holder and if they have a long term illness, disability

or infirmity which limits their daily activities. All of this data is used to identify if there are differences between the views of people as well as helping us to identify potential improvements to accessibility and how we communicate to service users.

Provision of Transport

For our home to school transport service we use census data and school data for mainstream transport planning. Alongside this, we have access to the EMS (Education Management System) which includes individual details about students which is particularly important for arranging transport in more isolated areas. The service also has individual details to ensure that relevant transport and appropriate support is provided for those students with Education and Health Care Plans. With regard to arranging supported public bus services we work with bus operators and also use census data and concessionary fare data.

3. What consultations or engagement has the group undertaken, were there any differences in results for different protected groups?

Neighbourhood Services

Age

- When undertaking improvement works in the rights of way network or Council owned sites officers undertake an accessibility assessment to ensure that works undertaken do not adversely affect the ability of disabled people to access paths and facilities.
- Enforcement procedures are in place for dog fouling and we endeavour to ensure our playing fields, parks and open spaces are safe for younger persons to enjoy the outdoors.
- Alternate Weekly Collections – Older people, mobility impaired people, or those with a health condition that prevents them from wheeling their bin to the collection point and collecting the bin may request the Council does this on their behalf provided that there is no other non-disabled person over 16 years of age resident at the address. The Council provides 'assisted' collections to 6,066 properties, which equates to 315,000 uplifts per annum, an increase from 284,000 uplifts the previous year.
- Charged for Bulky Waste Kerbside Collections – the Council is able to enter a property and remove the waste on behalf of the resident.
- HWRCs – the sites are tailored to meet the needs of protected groups by being split level to allow residents to deposit waste with the minimum amount of physical exertion, have dedicated disabled parking with a push button to attract the site staff's attention, and employ contractor's staff who receive E&D training and provide assistance to residents.
- Hazardous Household Waste Service – it is important to ensure that the needs of residents are catered for given that 45% of service users are aged 65 or over. The service is purely a collection and disposal service, there is no obligation on the waste management service to dismantle or undertake works to the property. Whilst the collection and disposal of hazardous waste is free to the householder, they are required to package the materials ready

for collection. However, the council's contractor will package the materials on their behalf where they are unable to do so. The high level of satisfaction with this service (97%) indicates that these measures are acceptable to the majority of service users. We will undertake awareness raising with the people who perform the bin collection service about where possible placing the bin in the place it was collected from as this is particularly important for visually impaired customers.

Disability

Green Spaces and Countryside

- Public rights of way are not a service 'provided' by the Council. However, where improvements to the existing condition of paths are planned the Council takes account of the needs of disabled people where it is possible to do so.
- Disabled people are included in the membership of the Northumberland National Park and County Local Access Forum
- When undertaking improvement works in the rights of way network or Council owned sites, Officers have regard to the the Equality Act 2010. An accessibility assessment is undertaken to ensure that works undertaken do not adversely affect the ability of disabled people to access paths and facilities.
- Officers have worked in the past with representatives of disability groups to identify paths and promoted walks that are suitable for disabled people and for users of all terrain disability vehicles.
- The Council's Rights of Way Improvement Plan includes a Statement of Intent on Access for All that outlines the Council's policy of working towards improving access to the countryside for a wider range of users, in particular people without a car and disabled people.
- Information provided to the public at the Council's parks and other sites is available in large print, Braille, or audio on request, we are working to improve access to public events, by providing information about access arrangements for disabled people in alternative formats, through leaflets and information on the web

Markets

- Officers are proactive in ensuring there is safe access around town centre market stalls for disabled users, ensuring there are no low level displays that may cause trip hazards.

Public Conveniences

- The Council provides specifically adapted facilities for disabled people. This includes ramps to allow easy access, pull cords, and lowered basins.

Cemeteries & Crematoria

- Where we provide a Cemetery or Crematorium we have made suitable adaptations to allow access for disabled users.

Waste Services

- Older people, mobility impaired people, or those with a health condition that prevents them from wheeling their bin to the collection point and collecting the bin may request the Council does this on their behalf provided that there is no other non-disabled person over 16 years of age resident at the address. The Council provides 'assisted' collections to 6,066 properties, which equates to 315,000 uplifts per annum, an increase from 284,000 uplifts the previous year.
- Front line staff have received training in equality awareness which includes disability awareness, and some have received specific Deaf awareness training.

Gender Identity

There is no evidence to suggest that transsexual people or those with different gender identities are disproportionately advantaged or disadvantaged by the functions of neighbourhood Services. Regular equality training for staff includes gender identity awareness.

Pregnancy and Maternity

We do not currently hold any information about whether a user of our service is pregnant or breastfeeding. In Northumberland 5% of the population is likely to be pregnant.

All users of our services are treated equally in order that unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation are eliminated. There is no evidence to suggest that pregnant women, those on maternity leave or those breastfeeding are disproportionately advantaged or disadvantaged by our services.

Race

We promote our services through our website, publications and press articles. Mechanisms are in place to translate information into other languages on request. Information on our website can be translated into different languages by using links on the page.

Promotion of services via the web page which is linked to a translation service, leaflets at council premises including HWRCs, libraries and council buildings, press releases and articles in the County magazine. Mechanisms are in place to translate information into other languages.

Our Cemeteries and Crematoria service offers the provision of consistent practices and procedures for burials and cremations to be carried out in accordance with burial/cremation law and Health and Safety legislation. So far as is practicable, this is done and in accordance with the religious beliefs or cultural requirements of the deceased and the wishes of the bereaved.

Religion or Belief

We have a process in place to provide a Muslim burial service at one of our cemeteries. We have set aside a designated area of the cemetery for this reason. The appropriate representatives of the Muslim community have been consulted and we are working closely with them regarding this service. As a result of feedback we have updated information on our website to make it more inclusive for people from different religious groups and taken account of other beliefs such as Atheism.

We engage with a wide variety of different religious groups in the community, the Single equality forum and NE Regional Faith Network.

We have given people the option to choose whether they display a cross at the Blyth Crematorium and Chapel to reflect the requirements of different religious or other beliefs. We also promote the Chaplaincy service offered to all NCC employees.

Sex

All of our services are provided equally to both men and women. Some waste services do require a degree of physical exertion by the resident which is addressed by the Council in the following ways; assisted collections and trained HWRC staff offer additional support to residents, whether male or female, who cannot cope with the physical demands of disposing of their waste. The hazardous household waste collection service does not remove the householder's obligation to dismantle the asbestos sheeting and have it packaged ready for collection. However, where the householder is unable to package the waste and cannot rely on friends or family to do this, the Council will arrange for its contractor to package the waste on the householder's behalf.

Marriage and Civil Partnership (Employees)

Council staff receive equality training which includes the management policies and principles relating to employees whether they are single, married, in a civil partnership, separated or divorced. Neighbourhood Services actively takes part any corporate initiatives to promote awareness of these policies.

Property Services And Capital Programme

No consultation of engagement exercises have been undertaken in the previous 12 months by Property Services.

Housing

No consultation of engagement exercises have been undertaken in the previous 12 months by Strategic Housing. Although residents have been invited to complete housing needs assessments in specific areas.

Technical Services

Consultations are carried out for all changes we make to the public highway, these may include the introduction of new traffic regulation orders or physical

improvements such as new footways/cycleways/bus stops or widening junctions and roads. We consult statutory consultees and affected residents on all changes and improvements.

When making changes to policies we consult our town and parish councils along with other representative groups such as Ramblers, British Horse Society, RNIB, Northumberland Low Vision Action Group (NAG) and other representative groups.

4. Are there any good practice examples or progress in improving services or employment opportunities for people with protected characteristics within your group or service areas?

All employees within Local Services and Housing Delivery are required to complete the statutory and mandatory training including equality training required by the Council, and employees are given the time and the equipment to complete this training in a timely manner. Progress is monitored on a monthly basis and the overall rate of completion is managed by senior managers to ensure that staff meet corporate requirements. This element of training ensures that all Local Services and Housing Delivery employees are up to date with legislation and best practice around equality, diversity and staff and customers within the protected groups.

Each service within the Local Services and Housing Delivery Group will continue to assess, review and analysis the potential impacts of proposed service reduction and their potential impact on the at risk groups following budget reductions.

Neighbourhood Services

Neighbourhood Services have always supported the Council's apprentice programme, however earlier this year following the introduction of the Apprentice Levy we have pledged to support the corporate initiative by providing a further 28 placements for apprentices. These placements will be filled in the main by young people however there are no restrictions to age limits for those wishing to undertake an apprenticeship and learn a new trade.

The service has also employed an apprentice with a visual disability and has taken the appropriate steps to provide them with support and equipment to get to and from work and to work more easily when performing their duties.

The service has provided placements for young adults with learning disabilities, and for those from a care background in order to give these young people the skills to gain employment and make positive changes to their life.

Neighbourhood Services, in partnership with Ponteland Town Council offer a same day burial service for those of the Muslim & Jewish faiths as this supports those communities where there is a cultural need to bury deceased loved ones as quickly as possible.

All of our depots and workshops display corporate material eg posters to promote the corporate campaigns to raise awareness of issues of equality in the workplace. These have included awareness of domestic violence, how to report bullying and victimisation at work, promoting equality of sex and sexual orientation, and the provision of a chaplaincy service.

We have noticeboards to promote events such as Pride Northumberland and many of our employees wear the rainbow lanyard to promote awareness of the needs of LGBT staff and service users to promote an environment of openness around sexual orientation and gender identity in the workplace.

Neighbourhood Services has recently secured funding (along with other partner organisations) to erect a monument to commemorate the famous suffragette Emily Wilding Davison. Davison was an active campaigner for equal rights and votes for women and her family lived in Morpeth where the proposed memorial will be situated.

Property Services And Capital Programme

Property Services is making a significant contribution to the accessibility of services equality objective by improving accessibility to Council buildings and ensuring Equality Act requirements are met. Recent works include the installation of push button automatic accessible doors into Eddie Ferguson House and Northumbria House in Blyth. In addition to this Property services has installed a lifting platform into the Brunnell Building and continued to progress access improvements to County Hall i.e. installing accessible sliding doors and improving disabled toilet facilities.

The Housing Team have built two fully adapted bungalows on the new-build Morpeth Road bungalow site in Blyth. All of the other new-build houses built between 3 and 4 years ago (180+) were built to Lifetime Homes standards, so they are adaptable for the future needs of residents, including the ability to install downstairs showers in the already existing toilets, bed spaces downstairs, future-proofing for stair-lifts and hoist provision and inclusion of level-access points to all of the properties. One family moving into a new home in Hodgsons Road Estate in Blyth have benefitted by moving into a new home which included an integrated through-floor lift.

Housing

The service has added an additional disabled access unit for clients requiring temporary accommodation.

Strategic Housing has part funded a Domestic Abuse Support Service (currently out to tender) which in addition to supporting women also includes specialist support for male victims and LGBTQ victims.

In partnership with Neighbourhood Services, Strategic Housing has introduced a refuse waste management system for unauthorised encampments. NCC supply

wheelie bins to allow the Travellers to manage their waste. This lessens conflict with the settled community and environmental impacts and has meant a reduction in complaints. The system has been embraced by the Travelling community and is well supported by Local Services. This has had a positive impact for the Travelling community and has also had a positive impact on community cohesion.

The Asylum Seeker and Refugee team responsible for the delivery of NCC's Home Office funded Vulnerable Syrian Refugee Programme were recognised internally by the Council for their work in this area with the award of NCC's "Team of the year for Equality and Diversity". The team operate an advocacy model of support, with tailored personal support plans, agreed with the refugee families shortly after their arrival in Northumberland, which set out in easily understandable terms how the team of family support workers will help individual families initially orientate to their new surroundings, and then, begin to engage with their new host communities and access opportunities for self-development, voluntary work and employment.

Technical Services

Between 2015 and 2017 we worked with RNIB and NAG and consulted through the town and parish councils to introduce new guidance which helps to minimise pavement clutter and improve the ease of use of our footways. The guidance has been widely publicised through the media as well as being issued to chambers of trade and business groups. The purpose of the guidance is to explain to traders and people placing obstructions in the highway what the implications are and how we will enforce. The guidance is aimed at easing travel for vulnerable road users such as those with impaired vision, using wheelchairs, pushing pushchairs or prams or needing to walk beside or guide vulnerable users.

5. What actions have been taken or are planned within the group or service area to achieve the NCC equality objectives?

Increasing our Equality Allies

Local Services and Housing Delivery already has several staff who are Local Equality Allies, however, over the next few months, we will be looking to increase the number of allies that we have in each service to ensure that we have a number of allies within each service area.

Staff Training

We will continue to deliver equality and diversity training for our staff. We will also conduct a number of Toolbox Talks for our Waste operatives to outline best practice for Assisted Waste Collections.

Age

We need to give further consideration to whether we need to monitor the age profile of the users of our service, particularly in relation to user satisfaction surveys. We also need to monitor satisfaction rates and complaints about accessibility issues in regard to physical accessibility of paths and facilities, and the provision of facilities for young children.

Disability

We will continue to monitor satisfaction rates and complaints about accessibility issues in regard to physical accessibility of all our services including access to Council properties, access paths and facilities, and accessibility of information and events. We aim to further improve information regarding the opportunities for disabled people to access and enjoy the countryside, parks and open spaces. We will also improve communication and consultation with groups representing people with different disabilities to ensure that the resources available for enhancing accessibility are targeted effectively.

We will also continue to monitor and provide safe and effective accessibility for disabled users for all of our publicly accessed Council properties and services, and also to allow safe mobility around town centres.

Pregnancy and Maternity

We need to give further considerations to whether we need to monitor the users of our services who are pregnant, breastfeeding or on maternity leave and we will monitor satisfaction rates and complaints in relation to users of our services who are pregnant, breastfeeding or on maternity leave.

Race

We will continue to monitor satisfaction rates and complaints about issues in regard to language and race, and consider further measures in response to demand. We will consider the use of articles in foreign language magazines and work with organisations like the the Berwick migrant support group to promote awareness of services.

Housing staff will continue to provide Negotiated Stopping Locations in 2018 which will improve facilities for the Travelling community . This will have a positive impact on the management of unauthorised roadside encampments, and should lessen tensions with the settled community and have a positive impact on the potential for hate incidents and crimes. It will also result in an improved living environment for nomadic Travellers migrating through the County.

As part of the support given to refugee families arriving through the home office scheme, liaison meetings with local police teams are held to advise officers when refugees are arriving and where they are moving to. The neighbourhood police teams meet all the families at planned information exchanging sessions shortly after their arrival where the role of the police, (particularly in relation to possible hate crimes), are discussed. These sessions are followed up by personal home

visits from police officers to give further reassurance to the newly arriving families. The families are actively encouraged to report any concerns to their family support workers who will take effective and appropriate action.

Religion or belief

We will continue to work closely with representative religious and other belief groups such as the Humanist group to ensure we can offer a comprehensive service that fully meets their needs and beliefs.

We will review the services we are able to offer across the County, and investigate options available to the variety of religious groups, and implement procedures as appropriate. We aim to further develop our website to ensure it details all options offered by our service in relation to cremation and burials.

We will consider if it is appropriate to monitor satisfaction rates and complaints in relation to religion and belief and will continue to evaluate the impact of any proposed service reductions on the users of our service with different religions or beliefs.

Sex

We need to continue to consider the safety and concerns of users our services and whether some users would be reluctant to use our services because of these concerns, and put mechanisms in place to reduce these concerns. We will consider a process to monitor satisfaction rates and complaints about accessibility issues relating to gender in regard to all of our services and facilities, and accessibility of information and events.

We will continue to evaluate the impact of any proposed service reductions to ensure there is no disadvantage or discrimination according to gender. Research on the Council's Rights of Way Improvement Plan revealed that females are more fearful than males of assaults when using the rights of way network. Women are less likely than men to walk or cycle alone on the rights of way network and are more likely to be accompanied by other family members and dogs. We need to ensure that females are not discouraged from using the rights of way network as a result of changes to the network.

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