

COUNCIL PLAN

2024 – 2027



ABOUT THIS PLAN

This Council Plan has two simple but fundamental purposes: it sets out the outcomes we want for our residents and our city, and how our organisation will strive to achieve them.

It is the foundation for the council's entire delivery framework, setting our interconnected priority areas to direct and inform our core strategies and delivery plans.

It's also a touchstone for the way we work. In a fast-changing landscape of UK austerity, global climate change and North East devolution, the modern role of councils is changing too – demand for our services is increasing and more complex, requiring careful financial management to ensure our resources continue to meet residents' needs. This plan defines our purpose and our principles for working together effectively with residents and partners every day, as one great city.

This plan is, by its nature, both a starting point and end goal for the council in our planning and delivery. It is designed to inspire new ideas and flexible collaboration to deliver the best possible outcomes for people in Newcastle.

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OUR VISION

TOGETHER WE ARE NEWCASTLE

The capital of North East England – a thriving city where everyone can fulfil their potential, lead healthy and happy lives, and build inclusive social and economic opportunities for all.

We are a welcoming, caring city, working closely together in partnership to deliver better outcomes for our communities.

NEWCASTLE AT A GLANCE

Population

300,125



Our population has grown by **7.1%** since 2011 and is forecast to reach **315,038** by 2040

113,705



Children and young adults aged 0-25

122,797 Households



15.2%

Of households are in fuel poverty

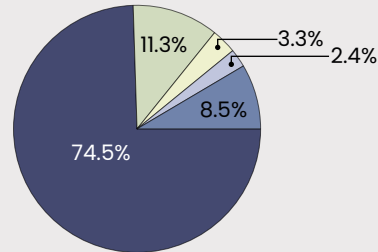
38%

Of children live in poverty

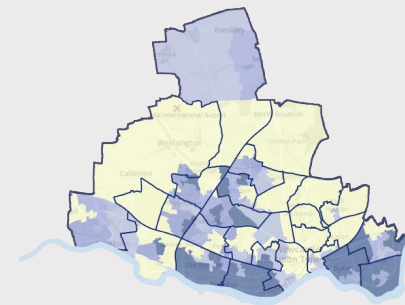
10.6%

Of households do not have English as their main language

Our Communities



- White British
- Non-White British
- Asian/Asian British
- Black/African/Caribbean/Black British
- Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Groups
- Other



- 10% most deprived
- 20% most deprived
- 30% most deprived
- 40-50% most deprived
- 50% least deprived

Economy, Education and Skills

£9.9 billion

Gross domestic product (GDP)

£2.3 billion

Foreign direct investment (FDI)

8,645



Businesses in the city

71.3%

Employment rate
(UK average 75.5%)



£31,713

Median gross annual pay for full-time workers

£175,000

Average house price



5.5

Housing affordability ratio
(House prices / gross annual workplace earnings)



66.26%

Of people with Level 2 (five or more GCSE passes) or equivalent

60,000

Students enrolled at higher education institutions



2 World leading universities

6.6%

Of 16-17 year olds not in education, employment or training

42%

Reduction in city CO₂ emissions since 2005



65%

Reduction in council CO₂ emissions in the last ten years

OUR COUNCIL

Newcastle City Council provides more than 800 services to our communities, some of which are statutory like children's education and safeguarding, social care services, waste collection, planning, housing, road maintenance and library services. We also provide a range of services that wrap around and improve our core provision. These services can play an important role in preventing escalation in demand for both the council's and our city partners' services, and they contribute to the efficient and effective management of our budgets.

We spend in the region of £1 billion each year across our General Fund, Housing Revenue Account, and capital programme. Approximately £130 million of this is ring-fenced to schools, and £120 million to services for council tenants. £680 million is used to meet our wide range of statutory requirements. We monitor the amount we spend with local suppliers and providers and use this to drive our approach to social value – ensuring we can get the most out of the 'Newcastle pound' for our residents.

We are committed to driving transformational change that meets the needs of our residents, our communities and the city, and maintains the financial sustainability of our vital local services.

The council is composed of 78 councillors who are democratically elected and accountable to residents. Councillors work with local people and partners, such as community groups, businesses and other organisations to agree and deliver on local priorities. Their decisions are implemented by council officers, who deliver services to the city on a daily basis.



To find out more about how we use our resources, take a look at our [Medium Term Financial Plan](#)

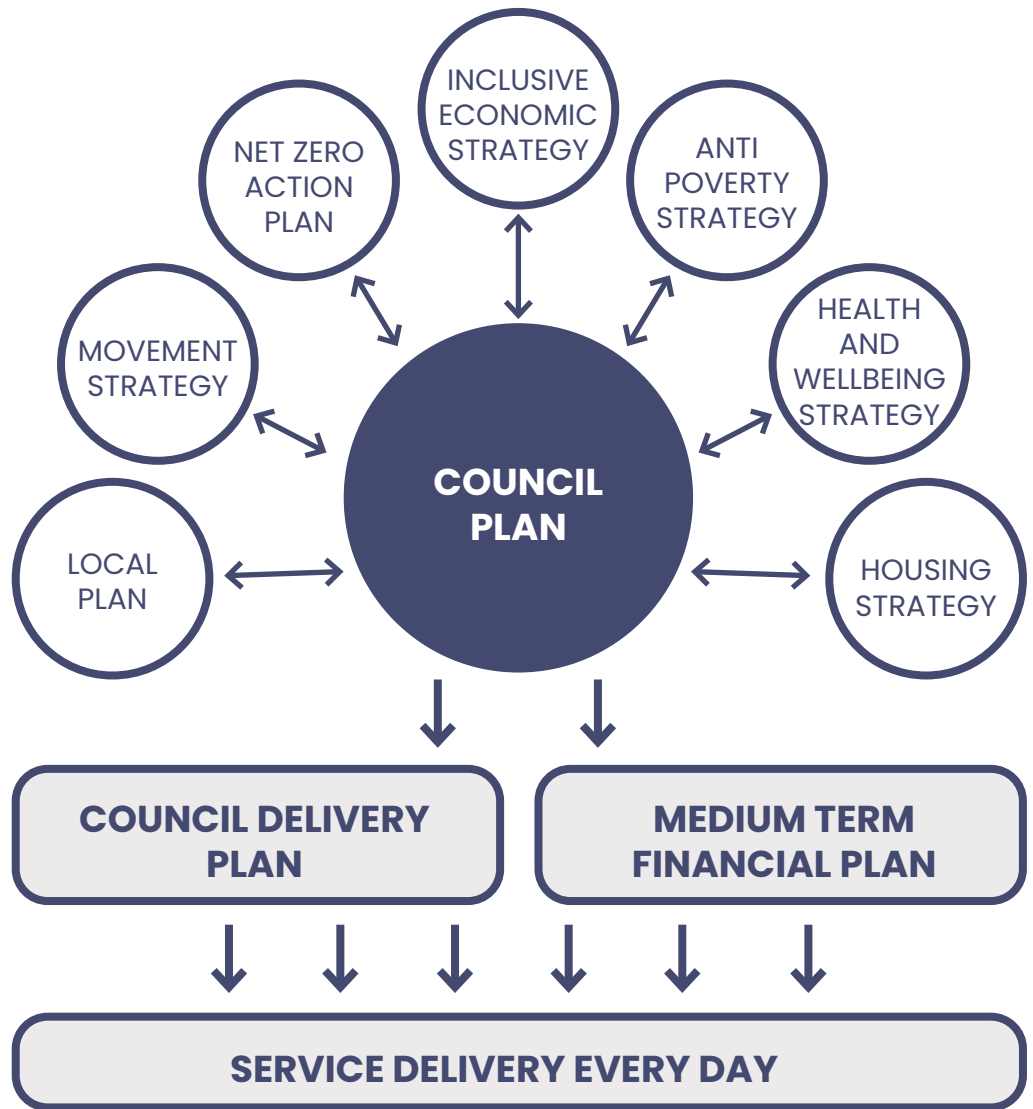
TURNING AMBITION INTO ACTION

Our great city is rich in communities of place, people, businesses, interests, action and practice. We recognise that the council is one organisation in a complex local system and that our role is to represent and serve our communities, steering our city with one voice.

We are ambitious for our residents and the outcomes they deserve. Our overarching priorities, action areas and principles for delivery all link to improved economic and health outcomes to create a fairer, more inclusive city with an economy that works for everyone. This means we are focused on tackling structural constraints to unlock investment, jobs, innovation, and social outcomes which are crucial to long-term prosperity.

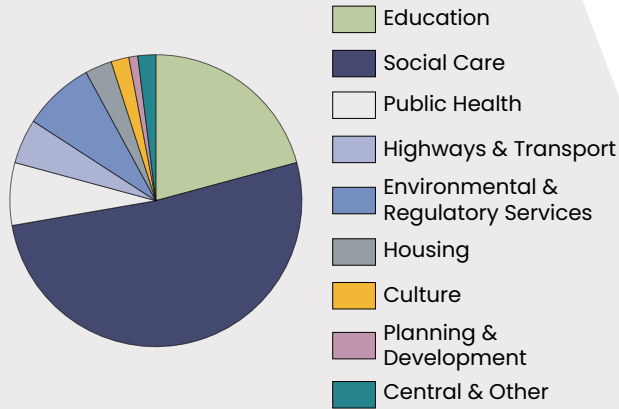
We know it will take sustained action, strong partnerships and significant resource to make an impact on the entrenched issues that we seek to tackle but securing our long-term vision for Newcastle is our top priority.

This Council Plan is a high-level strategic document at the centre of a delivery framework for our colleagues, residents and partners to better understand the role of our organisation in delivering improved outcomes for our city. It is informed by more detailed service planning with progress measured through a comprehensive performance and assurance framework.

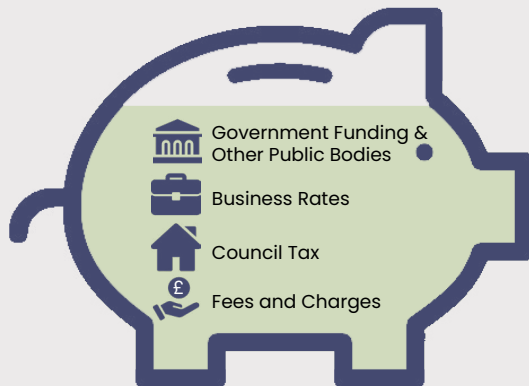


SERVICES WE PROVIDE EACH YEAR INCLUDE:

OUR SPEND





OUR INCOME




REVENUE BUDGET GAP


£59.7m over the next three years

7.3m Domestic bins emptied every year 

11,453 Births, deaths and marriages registered 

12,683 Children involved in our Holiday Activity Programme 

14 Libraries across the city with 440,000 items borrowed each year 

14 Children and family hubs across the city with 60,000 attendances for activities 

5,000 Children receiving support through social care and early help services

10,000 New requests for Adult Social Care


24,669 Council houses in the city 

20,000 tonnes of recycling collected and processed 

4,315 Cases of homelessness prevented

22,569 People supported to gain £22.8m in welfare benefits 


36,065 Council Tax reduction claimants supported

£17.2m Contracted spend on public health services in the city 

£145m foreign direct investment secured

13 Major events  10.4m Visitors

733 Food safety inspections 

1,239 New affordable and social homes built 

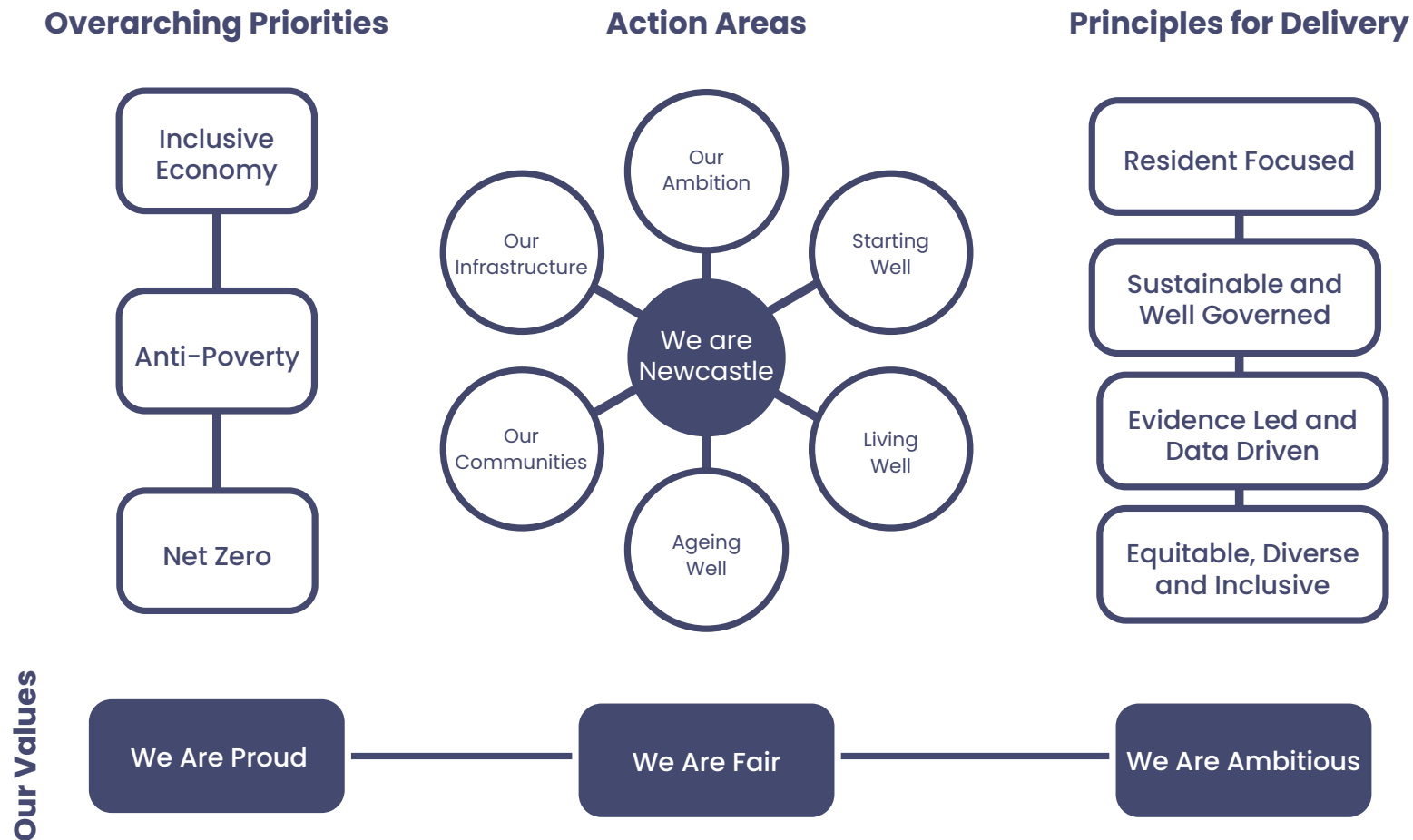
8,134,633m² of grass maintained (equivalent to 1,139 football pitches)

4,280 miles of road and pavement swept every 10 days 

12,879 Potholes filled

OUR FRAMEWORK

Our priorities are interdependent - progress in each directly impacts the other areas. This encourages a joined-up approach to policy and delivery within our city.



OVERARCHING PRIORITIES FOR CHANGE

INCLUSIVE ECONOMY

We will be a city where opportunity flows to all, and everyone in our city can contribute and benefit from Newcastle's success.



ANTI POVERTY

We will be a fair and inclusive city where everyone is free to live healthy, happy lives.



NET ZERO

We will be a city of the future, providing high-quality, sustainable housing and growing an inclusive, low-carbon economy.



A CITY THAT WORKS FOR ALL: OUR INCLUSIVE ECONOMY

Newcastle is already doing brilliant things as the economic engine of the North East. Our economy mirrors our city – ambitious, creative, diverse and dynamic. Large and small firms are leading the way in innovative and high-growth sectors, and our foundational economy is strong, spanning public, private and community sectors to provide valuable goods and services essential to our daily lives. This is underpinned by our core economy, where valuable social networks, and neighbourhood support systems are integral to our ability to contribute to wider economic activity.

We are proud of our significant assets – our college, universities, hospitals and health trusts, our hardworking businesses, our community organisations, and our vibrant cultural sector. They employ our residents, invest in our communities and attract more people and investment to our great city. It is on their work that our continuing success will be based. But too often, Newcastle’s success reaches only the few, and inequalities between our residents can become entrenched.

Inequality harms lives, limits our growth, and impacts on the capacity of businesses and communities to thrive. We are focusing on growing our economy and changing how that growth is transmitted to benefit our residents. We will deliver equitable economic outcomes and opportunities for all, no matter who you are or what part of the city you live or work in.

A strong economy is key to ensuring our residents have access to skills development opportunities and high-quality jobs that pay well. We will capitalise on our city’s sector expertise and international strengths to drive growth, prosperity and opportunity to residents in every part of Newcastle.



INCLUSIVE ECONOMY: WHAT WE WANT TO ACHIEVE

Outcomes we are prioritising:

We will be a city where opportunity flows to all, and everyone in our city can contribute to and benefit from its success. We want Newcastle to be a city where:

- Economic growth and prosperity is distributed across all communities in every area of the city
- Home-grown skills and strengths drive world-class innovation and enterprise
- Lifelong skills provision is systematically connected to Newcastle business growth needs which creates opportunity for all our residents
- Newcastle is recognised on the international stage as a leading city to invest in, visit and learn from

We will measure progress by monitoring:

- Employment and unemployment rates
- GVA (Gross Value Added) per filled workforce job
- Number of new business start-ups and scale-ups
- Business survival rate (after five years)
- Change in business rates payable since 2017 revaluation
- Visitor economy
- % of working-age residents with at least a Level 4 qualification
- Organisations in the city paying the Real Living Wage
- Number of adults of working age affected by in-work poverty

To find out more about how we are delivering an inclusive economy for Newcastle, take a look at our [Inclusive Economic Strategy](#)

WORKING TOGETHER TO IMPROVE OUTCOMES: ANTI POVERTY

We are committed to improving life outcomes for Newcastle residents.

Newcastle is a vibrant city and we have enjoyed many successes but despite our achievements, there are still too many people in our city who are affected by poverty. We know the profound effect this has on people – impacting everything from life expectancy to employment opportunities.

We will implement evidence-based interventions to address the root causes and consequences of poverty.

Working together with the city to embed a cross-societal approach, we will make life easier for people experiencing poverty. Initiatives that raise household incomes like the Real Living Wage will ensure residents of all ages can enjoy an improved quality of life.

Action here is closely linked to many other priorities in our Council Plan.

ANTI POVERTY: WHAT WE WANT TO ACHIEVE

Outcomes we are prioritising:

- Targeting support that prevents residents falling into poverty
- Working with partner organisations and community groups to develop measures to support residents experiencing economic hardship and poverty now
- Supporting residents to access all benefits, advice and support available to them which includes a Council Tax reduction scheme which supports as many vulnerable residents as possible
- Paying all council staff the Real Living Wage, requiring our contractors to support the Real Living Wage and driving towards Real Living Wage City status
- Working to reduce poverty levels in Newcastle in comparison to other core cities
- Promoting an inclusive economy, by raising skills and improving access to a range of employment opportunities for people on low incomes
- Improving health and educational outcomes for people with low incomes

We will measure progress by monitoring:

- Number of people supported to improve their skills
- Number of people supported into work
- Improved health and education outcomes for people on low incomes
- Value of previously-unclaimed benefits we support residents to access
- % of households in Fuel Poverty
- Take up of Free School Meals
- Number of individual insolvencies

To find out more, take a look at our [Anti Poverty Strategy and Action Plan](#)

OUR ROADMAP TO NET ZERO

Addressing climate change is both our most pressing and our most complex challenge, requiring a wholesale transition of our energy systems and economy.

Newcastle is delivering on ambitious climate emergency targets: our plans have the potential to deliver green jobs and growth whilst reducing our greenhouse gas emissions.

Exploiting this opportunity will cement and extend our internationally competitive position in the field and create industries of the future that our residents will benefit from.

Our commitment to Net Zero emissions by 2030 requires far reaching change in every part of our city. It is something that can only be achieved by everyone coming together to reduce our carbon footprint, mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change and grasp the opportunities of the new green economy.

In September 2020, we published the 'Net Zero Newcastle – 2030 Action Plan'. This extensive action plan establishes more than 100 Priority Actions that we are taking over the coming years support our transition to Net Zero which covers three key themes of Energy, Transport, and Adaptation. It is imperative that our roadmap to NetZero is a sustainable one that will benefit Newcastle for generations to come.



NET ZERO: WHAT WE WANT TO ACHIEVE

Outcomes we are prioritising:

- Delivering sustained and inclusive green economic growth by engaging public and private sector to deliver large-scale decarbonisation programmes and embedding sustainable practice in businesses and communities
- Equipping Newcastle's workforce with the right skills for these high-quality green jobs of the future
- Working to address the challenges of housing quality and fuel poverty through an ambitious programme of delivering energy efficiency and low-carbon retrofits to existing housing stock in Newcastle
- Embedding robust requirements for new-build housing to be low carbon and highly energy efficient in its design, build and operations through robust planning policies and implementation of these policies
- Improving our green spaces and biodiversity
- Preparing our city for future environmental impacts, investing in flood defences, growing and harnessing local biodiversity, and prioritising our green and blue infrastructure
- Expanding availability of 'lowest cost, low carbon' heat networks to organisations, businesses and residents across the city
- Creating a more efficient, sustainable and connected transport network so that everyone can participate in active travel and the benefits this brings to our neighbourhoods and residents
- Promoting a low-carbon municipal waste system that gives priority to the upper levels of the waste hierarchy (reduce, reuse, recycle, recovery, landfill) and reduces residual waste to landfill

We will measure progress by monitoring:

Delivery against our Net Zero action plan covering key themes reflecting the primary elements of our emissions inventory which account for 99% of our Scope 1 and 2 emissions.

- Energy
- Transport
- Adaptation & Sustainability

To find out more about how we are delivering on our commitment to Net Zero and measuring our impact, take a look at our [Net Zero Action Plan](#)



ACTION AREAS

SHAPING THE FUTURE

Our residents deserve the very best from those who serve them. We want to be a council they can be proud of.

In this plan, we set out our bold vision for the future and what needs to happen between 2023 and 2027 to make it a reality.

Our priorities for action are based on a wide range of evidence including existing local and regional plans and strategies, data-based evidence, our past performance, and vitally, the views of residents, continuously gathered and collated over engagement opportunities.

This high-level framework for action is supported by core strategies across the organisation and with our partners.

OUR AMBITION: A HIGHLY SKILLED, PROSPEROUS CITY

Newcastle is one the best cities in the world to live, work, study and visit – bursting with culture, opportunity and people who are passionate about the place they call home. We recognise the need to create the right conditions for business to thrive. Our city is growing and we are setting in motion actions that build on our unique strengths, including investing in transforming our city centre to realise its potential in a truly inclusive and sustainable way.

Newcastle is already home to ambitious firms leading the way in innovative and high growth sectors including health and life sciences. We are also one of the fastest-growing tech clusters in the UK leading on green energy transition, pioneering offshore energy research and operation, and electrification. Our business and professional services sector have made Newcastle's name as a great place to develop knowledge-intensive businesses.

We're also home to world-class cultural venues and heritage sites with a large creative workforce and an impressive, growing independent and commercial cultural scene.

We will build on the city's cultural success to attract leading events to the city which enhance the wellbeing of local people, encourage participation in arts and sport, and boost the local economy. We will build on our rich heritage, conserving and preserving our historic assets for future generations to enjoy. We will build on our city's culture compact to make Newcastle a thriving centre for arts, culture, heritage, and sport – delivering fun, free, and accessible things to do in every part of our city.

AMBITION: OUR FOCUS

- Promoting Newcastle across the world as a thriving place to live, work and visit
- Valuing home-grown research and innovation that represents our residents, reduces inequalities and benefits our city
- Nurturing Newcastle's culture and creativity to improve residents' quality of life
- Improving digital connectivity for all and seeking smart, sustainable solutions in service design
- Growing local, national and international partnerships that invest in Newcastle and directly benefit the lives of our residents



STARTING WELL: INVESTING IN OUR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

We recognise the huge role we play in shaping children's lives. Building a thriving city starts with high aspirations for our children and young people which is realised with targeted action that improves their health and wellbeing, ensures access to high-quality education and skills training and makes the homes and neighbourhoods in which children live and play safe and secure.

We want all our young people to be feel safe, happy and healthy and ready for their next steps. As well as implementing universal actions, we are also scaling up our support and services for children, young people and their families in Newcastle who face greater inequalities and bigger challenges.

We will work together to shape and inform how children experience growing up in Newcastle, actively including their voices at the heart of our services to make a difference for the next generation of adults who will live, work and socialise in Newcastle.

STARTING WELL: OUR FOCUS

- Ensuring children, young people and families can access services that meet their needs
- Increasing access to affordable things to do for children and young people across the city
- Creating safe neighbourhoods and public spaces for children and young people
- Creating accessible pathways for children and young people to develop their skills and interests for a fulfilling future
- Supporting children to leave care well



LIVING WELL: ENSURING GOOD WORK AND A HEALTHY STANDARD OF LIVING FOR ALL

Living well is the essence of this Council Plan, recognising that there are many factors that influence how people live well including how active people are, their employment status, the support they can access and the quality of their housing. The breadth of services that the council delivers, combined with our democratic accountability puts us in a unique position to bring residents, local communities and partner organisations together and harness the right skills, experience and capacity to help improve people's lives.

We are committed to working innovatively to deliver sustainable improvements in health and wellbeing to realise our vision of everyone living well in Newcastle.

Working throughout the life course, we are driving action that seeks to break the link between poverty, inequalities and poor health. Delivering on our ambition requires action across city partners, strategies and structures which will be facilitated by delivering this overarching Council Plan.

LIVING WELL: OUR FOCUS

- Growing the number and availability of jobs, skills development and work experience opportunities in our city, ensuring they are inclusive for people with caring responsibilities, additional support needs or who are neurodiverse
- Growing the number and availability of apprenticeships that attract and retain talent in Newcastle
- Championing volunteering and social action to grow skills and foster cohesive communities
- Promoting payment of the Real Living Wage to employers in Newcastle
- Improving financial skills for residents and access to information, advice and guidance to increase financial wellbeing



AGEING WELL: A LONGEVITY CITY

Everyone in Newcastle has the right to a good life, especially as they get older, and our whole society benefits when communities can age well. Working with partners and communities across the city, we are implementing age-friendly actions to ensure Newcastle is a leading place in the UK to age well.

We are also supporting world-leading research in our city that will shape the future of health and ageing. As a Longevity City, we are actively considering how we can create the environments and opportunities that enable people to be and do what they value most throughout their lives.

As well as improving residents' lives, ageing well offers a huge economic opportunity for Newcastle. We already host tens of thousands of future scientists and doctors, with 50,000 students studying Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects regionally (one of the largest clusters outside London) and we are a testbed for research and life sciences innovation. Building on the world-leading National Innovation Centre for Ageing and the biomedical cluster centred around the Helix, we will continue to accelerate our healthy innovation and longevity economy. We will ensure Newcastle is home to businesses that grow our economy and support improvements to public health so we can all have happier, healthier, more productive lives.

AGEING WELL: OUR FOCUS

- Including the voices of older people and their families at the heart of our work, shaping the places they live
- Ensuring housing options for older people that enable them to live well at home, for longer
- Pursuing innovation in service design and delivery that enables older people to live independently for longer
- Supporting older people to stay digitally and socially connected with their communities



OUR COMMUNITIES: SAFE NEIGHBOURHOODS AND GOOD HOMES

We want thriving, inclusive communities for our city, where people can access the support they need, when they need it.

Our vision is for high-quality, affordable homes for everyone, in clean and safe neighbourhoods where residents feel proud and connected. The place we live directly impacts our health, wellbeing and achievement of our life goals, and we want our city to offer a balanced housing market that gives choice and meets Newcastle's needs.

We also recognise the key role the council has in making our streets and neighbourhoods clean and safe places where people want to spend their time. By getting these basics right, we will build more cohesive communities for a happier, healthier Newcastle.

We must ensure that everyone in Newcastle has a voice and an opportunity to shape the decisions that affect the places they live, work, worship, study and volunteer. We are committed to building engagement networks that include and empower all residents to take an active part in strengthening their communities. To do this in all our activity, we will value all voices equally, and seek the voices of those residents who may otherwise be least heard.

COMMUNITIES: OUR FOCUS

- Providing choice in good quality, affordable housing and support services to help people fulfil their life goals
- Preventing homelessness in our city wherever possible
- Ensuring our roads, pavements, green and open spaces are clean, safe and well looked after
- Inclusively engaging and consulting with residents and partners in the city
- Building active city networks of influence that represent and include all communities, to work together on issues affecting Newcastle



OUR INFRASTRUCTURE: A CONNECTED CITY

A better connected city improves the lives of every Newcastle resident. As well as shaping our daily lives as we move around the city, it drives us to make changes that unlock improvements to the ways we live in Newcastle. Working closely with the combined authority and city partners we will create a more efficient, affordable, sustainable transport network that supports our ambition for Net Zero and inclusive economic growth. This includes supporting people to lead healthier lives and make more sustainable choices such as walking and cycling.

Seamless digital connectivity is also essential for any thriving city in every aspect of living, working and participating in society. While access to superfast fibre is above 98% in Newcastle, there are areas of poor connectivity in the city which must be addressed. We are working to anticipate growing capacity needs and hard to reach areas as well as intensifying our efforts to tackle digital exclusion.

Improved connectivity makes Newcastle flourish – connected communities with access to opportunities that establishes the necessary conditions to drive a thriving inclusive economy.

INFRASTRUCTURE: OUR FOCUS

- Reducing transport emissions for a cleaner, greener Newcastle
- Influencing a safer, more accessible and inclusive transport system for all
- Ensuring well-maintained highways and public spaces
- Improving Newcastle's digital infrastructure, including access to superfast broadband across the city



PRINCIPLES FOR DELIVERY

Resident Focused

Sustainable and Well Governed

Evidence Led and Data Driven

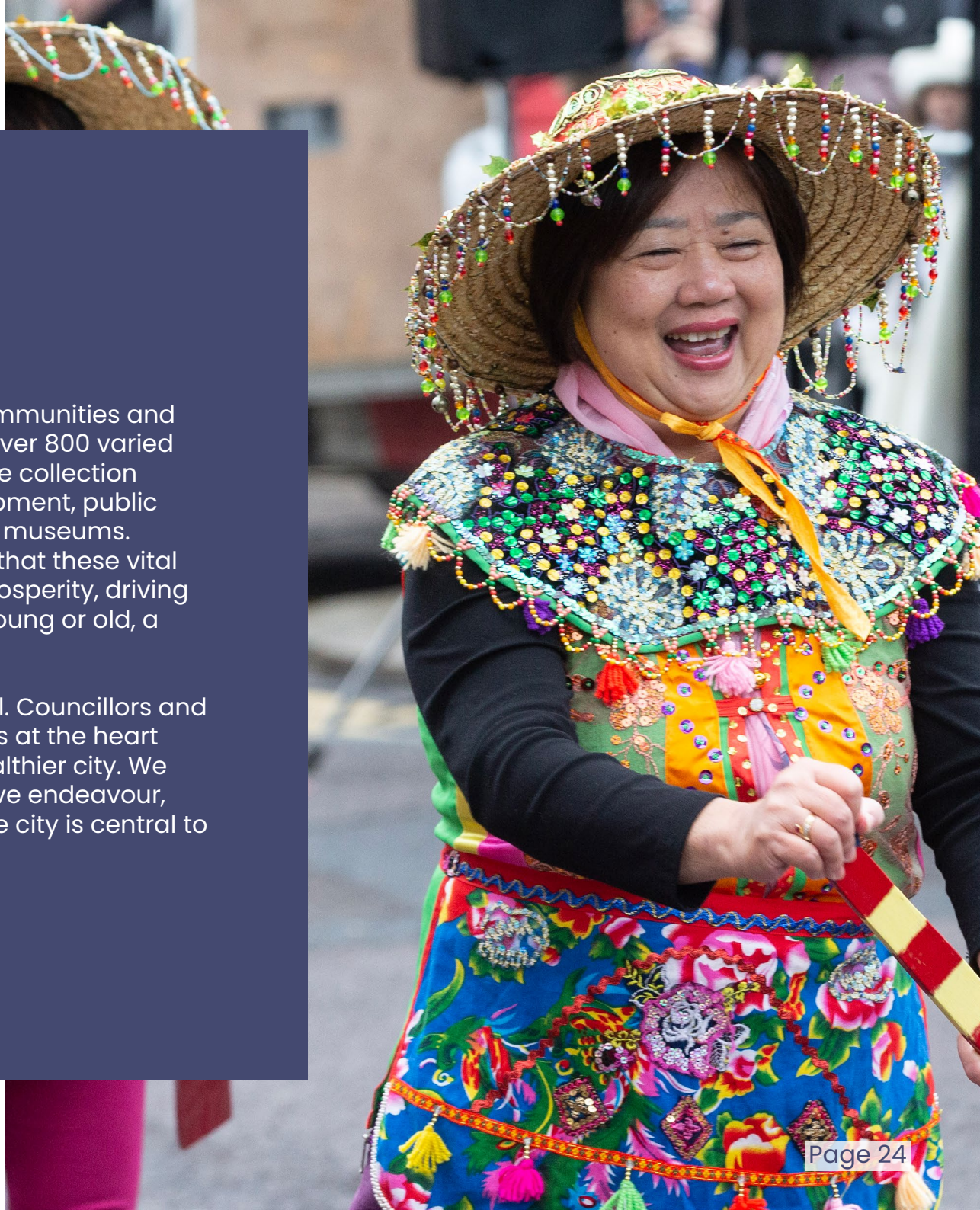
Equitable, Diverse and Inclusive



RESIDENT FOCUSED

The council plays an important role in shaping our communities and the city. We serve over 300,000 residents and deliver over 800 varied services from social care for adults and children, waste collection services, street cleansing, planning, economic development, public health, housing, highways management, libraries and museums. Whether statutory or value-adding services, we know that these vital local services help shape our great city by creating prosperity, driving improvements in health and giving every individual, young or old, a great experience in this city.

Residents rightly have high expectations of the council. Councillors and officers all strive for excellence, and we place residents at the heart of our decision making to ensure a more inclusive, healthier city. We understand that building a brighter future is a collective endeavour, and that's why partnerships and collaboration with the city is central to our approach.



SUSTAINABLE AND WELL GOVERNED

Financial planning is critical to ensuring that we have a clear understanding of available resources, the costs of delivering services and plans for new services and efficiencies. Our Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) sets out how we will use our financial resources in a sustainable way to secure our financial position and continue to deliver value for money public services that residents expect. We regularly review our MTFP to ensure we are responsive to change, including external factors like economic shocks, legislative change, supplier risks, and market opportunities.

As we work towards achieving our vision for Newcastle, we are committed to providing great, accessible services that offer value for money to our residents in a way that minimises our impact on the environment and promotes inclusion.

Being well governed ensures that we are doing the right things, for the right people in a timely, inclusive, and accountable manner. It ensures our organisation is supported by good management while providing good stewardship of public money in order to deliver good outcomes for our residents and service users.



EVIDENCE LED AND DATA DRIVEN

We believe that people in Newcastle are best positioned to know what they need to live happier, healthier lives. We are uniquely privileged as a council to provide a huge range of local services for people living and working in our city, giving us levels of knowledge and insight about the ways we live. Together with the learning and expertise of our anchor partners and our community organisations, we have the potential to turn our collective evidence bases into a powerful resource for Newcastle's future.

We will do this by harnessing the investment in research and regional knowledge assets to produce accessible and actionable insights for policy makers, service designers and delivery teams. This will develop our capacity and capability and ensure that every opportunity from funding for major projects in the city to the continuous improvement of our day-to-day activity, is built on information that truly represents Newcastle and delivers meaningful impact for residents.



EQUITABLE, DIVERSE AND INCLUSIVE

Newcastle is best served by a council that is equitable, diverse and inclusive. We are actively working to ensure everyone benefits from our city's success and crucially, we recognise that more work is needed in the wider economic and social context which has exacerbated poverty and inequality across our city. We will do this by learning more from communities, businesses and partners – valuing their experiences to shape and deliver an inclusive Newcastle.

We will design equality, diversity and inclusion into our services by default – both those we deliver directly, and those that are delivered on our behalf by our partners.

We will also lead the way by being a truly inclusive employer, embedding ambitious practice that challenges us and influences others in the city to do more and do better.



OUR VALUES

Newcastle City Council is a large and complex organisation with a workforce of approximately 5,500 people, delivering valuable public services to over 300,000 residents. Our dedicated workforce is our greatest asset, and we understand the importance of developing a people-centred organisational culture that will support our colleagues to strive for excellence every single day.

Our values are embedded in our organisational culture and are central to everything we do, guiding the decisions we make, clarifying ways of working, and explaining how it feels to be part of this organisation, and this great city.

We live our values so we can build a brighter future together.



We take pride in and celebrate each other's achievements



We are honest and treat people equal to their needs



We are passionate, determined, enthusiastic and want to succeed



WE ARE NEWCASTLE