

Dynamic City Portfolio Report

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Introduction

As Portfolio Lead for a *Dynamic City*, I am delighted to present this report which covers our achievements over the last year, as well as our priorities going forward.

The Dynamic City has within its remit a diverse range of services and functions. In this portfolio, we bring together leadership for housing and planning, our approach to tackling homelessness and rough sleeping and public safety and regulation services.

We have made significant progress this year, especially in the delivery of housing services for residents. Our aim is to ensure that all residents in Newcastle, no matter what their specific circumstances are, can live in homes that are safe, sustainable and of a good quality. We take seriously

our duties and responsibilities to ensure homes are maintained properly. We have introduced damp and mould polices and website support pages for both our council owned and privately managed homes in the city to respond to the regulatory changes on managing this important health and safety issue as well as assisting residents to respond to the cost-of-living crisis and growing energy costs.

We are working to implement a whole system Housing approach, which will streamline and align processes to ensure that residents are able to access the right housing services quickly and efficiently. We also introduced a multi-agency approach to homelessness which prevented 4315 cases of homelessness last year.

To continue improving we are currently reviewing the way we deliver housing services, including those delivered by Your Homes Newcastle (YHN). The main change we are proposing is to bring the services provided by YHN back into the council alongside other council-run housing services.

We have also started work on a new planning framework for the city and continued to deliver our regulatory responsibilities to keep our residents and environment safe. We have sought to ensure that the city remains culturally diverse and vibrant, welcoming a variety of different events and with them visitors to the city. During challenging economic times, we have continued to work with businesses in the commercial and hospitality sectors to positively support investment and to ensure a quality of offering in shaping the city.

We have worked hand in hand with residents to understand their daily challenges so that we can offer the best support, but I appreciate that there is still a lot of work to be done.



Dynamic City Portfolio

The Dynamic City portfolio delivers services that are fundamental to achieving our priorities to **reduce poverty, mitigate the impact of the cost-of-living crisis** and **achieve net zero carbon emission targets**.

People are at the heart of every decision we make, with many of our programmes and strategies being co-designed with residents and communities. Housing contributes substantially to the amount of carbon the city produces. Newcastle's residential buildings were the highest emitter of city-wide emissions in 2020 with 34% of the total **1.194 million tonnes of CO2** emitted in that period. We have helped to ensure that through planning and building control, any new development in the city is delivering the highest quality of efficiency standards.

Retrofitting poor-quality houses will improve the energy efficiency and health of tenants, especially for fuel poor households and could save tenants £444 per year on average. We have secured £5million for retro fit pilots in the private sector and circa £12M for council homes. This is delivering programmes which will insulate existing properties in the city and, where possible, changing connection to low carbon heat sources. This is not only helping the city achieve its net-zero targets but helping people to save money on fuel.

We are acutely aware of the pressures faced by households who are trying to access a decent and affordable homes. The cost-of-living crisis is contributing further to affordability concerns. Rents are continuing to rise to keep up with inflation and the drastic rise in inflation through the cost-of-living crisis only seeks to worsen the issue. We are working to deliver more affordable housing in an inclusive and sustainable way. Last year 1249 new homes were built, 214 were classified as affordable and of this number 157 were reliant on Council intervention for delivery.

Review of Finances

2022-23 Outturn

Service Area	Expenditure	Income	Net
Integrated Services	7,629,028	(2,365,732)	5,263,296
Public Safety and Regulation	4,675,500	4,149,340	526,160
Housing	12,179,335	(10,514,191)	1,665,144
Planning	3,429,067	(2,484,763)	944,304
Building Control	£825,475	(£706,235)	£119,240
Total	28,738,405	11,921,581	8,518,144

Review of the Year and Future Considerations

The work of this Dynamic City portfolio is to create decent neighbourhoods that provide a sense of community, putting residents at its heart, and making Newcastle a great place to live. We want to work hand in hand with residents to understand day-to-day challenges so that we can offer support in the best way we can. We know that the activities of this portfolio directly impact residents' lives and so we will strive to deliver programmes and policies that have a positive impact. We will continue to build on the success we have seen in delivering against our priorities and working with residents and stakeholders, we will look to develop further initiatives that will support communities within our great city.

Integrated Services

Our Active Inclusion Newcastle (AIN) partnership approach works to make it everyone's business to prevent homelessness and financial exclusion by supporting residents to have a more stable life. Newcastle is recognised nationally for good practice, collaborative work and using resident experience and research to improve services in homelessness and rough sleeping prevention. We continue to respond to growing demand for financial inclusion and homelessness prevention support in the context of limited resources, rising demand and deepening poverty. Our prevention model focusses our work into touchpoints (e.g., the libraries, the Job Centre and supported accommodation), trigger points (e.g., somebody falling into rent or council tax arrears) and transition points (e.g., people receiving their refugee status).

Last year 278 people were found sleeping rough, with an average of 14 people found each night. Our 2022-23 data shows how financial inclusion services help to prevent homelessness:

- Prevented **4,315** cases of homelessness
- Maintained **zero** B&B use to meet statutory homeless duties since 2006
- Supported **4,039** residents to write off **£1,311,155** in problematic debt
- Supported **479** households through the Supporting Independence Scheme, plus **164** awards of targeted support for people leaving homeless accommodation or the asylum system.

We established the multiagency Sustaining Tenancies at Risk (STaR) panel, to bring together the Housing Advice Centre, Money Matters, Multidisciplinary team, Children's Social Care and Early Help with YHN's Income Collection, Financial Inclusion and Support and Progression Teams.

Our Safeguarding Newcastle Against Poverty project is based on our data which evidences a link between poverty, financial exclusion and safeguarding. By working in partnership with the West End Foodbank, officers from Active Inclusion and the Safeguarding Adults Unit have put in place a training programme and clear referral routes which allow the Pathways Team at the West End Foodbank to connect people who use the

foodbank with a range of services, including Money Matters, Welfare Rights, the Housing Advice Centre and Adult Social Care. The project has led to a heightened understanding of the relationship between poverty and safeguarding adults.

Our Move and On Complex Case Panels bridge the gap between supported and general needs housing and bring partners together to help manage the transition from homelessness quickly and safely. We have funded 3 GP sessions per week to enhance health support for people who are rough sleeping or homeless. As part of this work GP's join the daily rough-sleeping outreach to engage with people found rough-sleeping, identify health need, and facilitate connection to wider health services.

Integrated Services Future Considerations

The housing system faces unprecedented demand for accommodation, predominantly driven by the sale of council housing and low numbers of replacement properties. In addition, the Government's Streamlined Asylum Process which requires us to find accommodation at short notice and with limited collaboration from the Home Office. We are working with the Fairer Housing Unit, the Private Rented Service and Your Homes Newcastle to increase supply and manage demand. We will use the whole system housing approach to make collective decisions to move people through our pathways – off the street, into a home, keep a home.

Public Safety and Regulation

Regulatory services are at the forefront of keeping our residents and workers safe from well-known and newly emerging threats such as poor housing, fire safety in high rise buildings, noise and anti-social behaviour, food poisoning, health and safety, event safety, air quality and pollution prevention control, weights, and measures, unsafe or fake goods, and scams. These services are key in tackling the wider determinants of health and health inequalities, with interventions creating healthier and safer workplaces, reducing pollution, and improving air quality, food standards and product safety. We ensure the economy is not distorted by unfair or illegal practices, that new enterprises are supported to grow, and that consumers are sold safe, accurately described products and services.

Last year we received and responded to over 25,197 service requests, incidents, reports, and complaints.

Public Protection and Neighbourhoods

We continue to deliver on the multiple Property Licensing Designations in the city. Our Property Licensing schemes focus on ensuring the safety of private rented tenants and dealing with rogue landlords and tenants who cause anti-social behaviour issues in their communities.

We visited 1555 privately rented homes, ensuring they were in a safe and habitable condition for residents last year. The selective licensing designations were implemented in April 2020 with the goal of improving housing conditions, management, and occupation of privately rented properties. Additionally, they aimed to tackle anti-social behaviour (ASB). The city-wide Additional Licensing scheme was introduced to regulate the management, use, and occupation of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs).

To date we have received applications for 5191 selective licences, 2353 additional licences, and we currently have 2303 Mandatory HMO's. Based on the processing of the application 9.29% of these properties received short licences due to concerns surrounding the licence. 514 of these are due to property management, and 401 are as a result of property condition. In addition, 171 licences have been revoked, 55 have been rejected, and 57 have been refused. We have also issued 366 civil penalties for failures to comply with the licence scheme, and we have taken 73 prosecutions.

Trading standards

One of the key issues during the year is the sale of illicit vapes and illicit tobacco. The trading standards team have seized 29,211 suspected illegal cigarettes and 166.15 kg of suspected illegal hand rolling tobacco. We take our enforcement responsibilities extremely seriously and have worked hard to tackle the sale of vapes to children. To protect residents from scams we have implemented "No cold calling zones" that cover some 81,181 households in the city.

Food, Health and Safety, Events and Planning

We successfully conducted inspection and audit work needed to comply with the Food Standards Agency's Covid Recovery Plan. Alongside this, 91% of food businesses in the city now score 4 or 5 stars in the National Food Rating Scheme, which provides information about the hygiene standards of businesses supplying food directly to consumers.

Last year, the events and safety advisory group managed more than 200 events including sporting activities such as the Rugby League World Cup, Magic Weekend and also embraced the challenge of hosting two sell out concerts at St. James Park. These events were fantastic and showcased our city and its assets to the world.

Licensing

We are the local licensing authority for a range of licensable and commercial activities. There are 1329 premises licences, 66 club premises certificates, 58 gambling premises, 143 pavement café licences, 5 sex establishments and 4157 personal licence holders in force in the city. During the year there were 608 premises related licensing applications made (new and variation), 127 personal licence applications and 374 temporary event notices given.

Environment Team

We monitor air quality, inspect, and permit 55 industrial processes, tackle waste crime, access potentially contaminated sites, and provide advice and information on environmental issues and developments. Our officers respond to complaints about bonfires, smoke, dust, insects and other (statutory) nuisances, fly-tipping, pollution, litter, business waste, waste carriers, dogs, and take enforcement action as and when necessary. Last year the team responded to 2734 complaints. Last year we instigated 290 prosecutions for 314 criminal offence and Issued 1,725 fixed penalty notices, 5 civil penalties and 13 simple cautions.

Public Safety and Regulation Future Considerations

We work to deliver the best possible services to our customers, protect the environment, public health, and support those impacted by poverty and the cost-of-living crisis.

Licensing

We will publish and consult on our licensing policy to help place shape the future of licensing in the City over the next 5 years. The new policy encourages a diverse licensed premises offering, promotes best practice measures through our Newcastle Licensing Charter and looks to incorporate safeguarding measures and a partnership approach including safe transport measures for staff working in the night-time economy. The new policy proposals also include environmental best performance and public health considerations.

Public Protection and Neighbourhoods

Dealing with complaints about damp and mould and houses that fall below minimum energy requirements is a priority. We are reviewing the Property Licensing designations to see if licensing can be used as a tool to drive improvement in stock condition and manage anti-social behaviour in the City. We will maintain are programme of High-Rise Building Inspections across the City with Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue and Building Control. Monitoring and inspecting asylum accommodation in the city is a priority and we are ensuring that housing standards are maintained to ensure fairness and equality.

Food Safety, Planning, and Events

We will maintain our programme of food safety and health and safety visits. There is the challenge of delivering the new food standards code of practise that the Food Standards Authority are introducing. Education of food businesses on allergens is also a high priority.

Environment Team

We will analyse and give feedback on air quality in the city to assess the effectiveness of the clean air zone on reducing emissions from road traffic. We will work with the Marine Management Organisation, local businesses, and Environment Agency to ensure that the Tyne is managed in a sustainable way to maintain dredging and the business that rely on

river transport. We will be consolidating our smoke control orders into one order for the whole of the city. It is recognised that wood burning is on the increase and causing problems with levels of fine particles in the air.

Trading Standards

With the cost-of-living crisis it is important that we continue to target those that seek to exploit the vulnerable through scams. We will work with the police to tackle those businesses that engage in illegal activity such as illicit sales of knives, alcohol, and tobacco. The team will implement the new planned legislation to deal with the sale of single use plastic crockery and cutlery and labelling on recycling.

Housing Future Considerations

Housing plays a central role in our lives. Everyone deserves to live in a decent home with good quality community facilities in their local neighbourhood. We are acutely aware of the pressures currently faced by households and those trying to access a decent and affordable home.

For this reason, we continue to work tirelessly to deliver on our new build ambitions to support our growing population of all ages and income levels. We continue to make best use of existing housing by bringing empty homes back into use; to invest in council housing, assist people to remain living in a home of their choice, and to improve the customer journey for those seeking to access social housing. We also work to ensure that properties across the private and social rented sector are maintained to a high standard, and free from disrepair that will be detrimental to the health and wellbeing of the tenants.

Review of housing services

In recent years there have been wider legislative changes which have had an impact on the housing sector. Due to this rapidly changing context within which housing services are operating, the council decided it was necessary to undertake a review of all housing services to determine the most appropriate approach to delivering these services in future years.

Following this review which considered changing legislation, financial challenges faced by the social housing sector and the increased demand for council housing in the city, Cabinet, in July, agreed that bringing all housing services together in one team is their preferred option. If see all services currently delivered by Your Homes Newcastle (YHN), the council's arms-length management organisation (ALMO), become the council's direct responsibility.

Bringing all housing services together could mean some changes for tenants and leaseholders. Therefore, before a final decision is made it is vitally important that we undertake a test of opinion with residents, tenants and key stakeholders to give everyone the opportunity to have their say how the Council should proceed.

Damp and Mould

We take seriously our duties and responsibilities to ensure homes are maintained properly, especially in tackling damp, mould and condensation. The tragic death in Rochdale of Awaab Ishak has highlighted the importance of ensuring that tenants do not live in unsafe homes plagued by damp and mould. In July we launched an online portal to give tenants within the private rented and housing association sectors advice and information on their rights and responsibilities on dealing with damp, mould and condensation within their home.

This mirrors similar advice for tenants living within our council housing where we have set up a dedicated team and telephone and email enquiry lines to respond to reports of dampness, condensation, and mould. Targeted campaigns through social media and Homes and People and advice on our website helps inform residents on how to manage condensation and where to seek further advice and support.

Whole System Housing

Together, with our wider housing partners we are working towards implementing a whole system housing approach that builds resilience and places people at the heart of decision-making frameworks. The aim of this is to have a system that supports people and not just process. We want it to build on good practice, to make it fairer and giving a commitment for it to be more customer focused, providing a more positive and easier journey to accessing a home in the social housing sector in Newcastle.

Housing Delivery

In keeping with our new build ambitions, another **1,239 new homes** were built in 2022-23, with **205 of these being affordable**, and **194 were facilitated by council** activity of using its own assets, resources, and capital receipts. One example on new housing development is the Rise, Scotswood. During the past year an additional 140 new homes have been built. These homes are served by a District Heating System, one of, if not the largest, low-rise district heating systems in the country. The system is powered by a single Energy Centre which has been designed as adaptable to provide a Combined Heat and Power provision, and has the capacity to provide heat and hot water to all 1800 new homes within the masterplan area along with the new retail, leisure or health facilities developed.

Capital investment programme in YHN/Council stock and Housing Revenue Account

As the biggest landlord in the city with over 25,000 homes it is important that these homes receive the investment needed so that they remain up to the standard that people expect that they contribute to the health and wellbeing of tenants, and impact positively on neighbourhoods. Investment made into the council's housing stock is derived from rental income. On the back of recent Government imposed rent reductions, and with significant inflationary pressures of late, the financial pressures on the Housing Revenue Account

(HRA) remain challenging. This said, investment in 2022-23 to maintain the stock stood at nearly **£38m for major repairs** and upgrades, and additional near £27million for routine repairs and maintenance.

There are not enough homes to meet demand, and those that are available are often oversubscribed, with demand far outstripping supply. In July Cabinet approved changes to the Allocations and Lettings Policy that will improve the customer journey and allocate homes more fairly.

Private sector housing

The council's Private Rented Service (PRS) offer advice and assistance to landlords, tenants This can range from: providing information as to the options available in the PRS; to helping people secure suitable accommodation via a Rent Deposit Scheme. For example: last year at total of **3,468** clients were supported to understand their housing options, and **391** tenants supported to sustain their tenancies.

It is vital we make the best use of the homes that are already exist in the city. Empty homes are a wasted resource and can cause blight to an area and attract anti-social behaviour if they fall into a state of disrepair. To assist home-owners and private landlords to bring them back to use the council offer advice and renovation grants to assist with capital costs. On average we bring 300 much needed homes per year back into use with a high of **456** in 2022-23. If this approach is unsuccessful officers within Public Safety and Regulation use a range of enforcement powers to bring properties back into use. This year a renewed focus is being made to use tools such as enforced sales and Empty Dwelling Management Orders to tackle long term empty properties.

Care and Repair Newcastle (CARN) continue to provide Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) to assist people to remain living independently in a suitable home of their choice for as long as they are able. This can include adaptations, such as stairlifts and widening doors. Over the year 2022-23 567 DFG adaptations were completed. Similarly, the Minor Adaptation Service (MARS) installs small scale adaptations costing under £1000 to assist with everyday living, such as, garb rails and lever taps. Throughout 2022-23 MARS received 2637 referrals fitting 2840 minor adaptations.

We continue to bid for external funding to be invested into making existing homes in the city, both in the private and social housing sectors, more energy efficient, assist with reducing heating bills, as well as helping with our ambition to be net zero by 2030. In 2022-23 we secured over £2.6million of external grant funding towards a £6 million programme, retrofitting a total of 417 homes with measures such as: insulation, low carbon heating and solar PV systems.

Housing

Housing is a key determinant of everyone's health and wellbeing we must ensure that we have the right number, type, and quality of homes in the city that meet the needs and

aspirations of our current and future residents, and that housing makes its contribution to addressing the threat of the climate emergency and future sustainable living.

We must also continue to review our approach to the delivery of all housing across the city and making it easy and accessible for our residents. Following the outcome of the test of opinion on the preferred approach to housing delivery, we will make a final decision on how housing services will be managed.

The preferred approach will help generate more direct contact with tenants, cut back on duplication, make better use of financial resources to increase investment into council housing to tackle inflationary pressures, to address issues related to damp and mould, and offer better opportunity to respond to revised national regulatory and legislative requirements. A nationally set standard suite of performance indicators called **Tenant Satisfaction Measures** (TSMs) has already been introduced and, perhaps most significantly, local authority landlords will be subject to proactive inspection of performance and compliance with the Consumer Standards from April 2024, on a rolling, four-year basis.

We will initiate a full **stock condition survey** of the homes owned by the council. This will provide increased accuracy of the key information we hold about the stock and assist with planning and targeting the investment needed to ensure homes are decent.

New Housing Strategy

The housing and cost of living crisis means Newcastle does not have enough homes of the right type or tenure for a growing and diverse population to suit all needs, ages and income brackets. For this reason, the Council will be delivering a new and inclusive Housing Strategy with the aim to:

- maintain our ambitious programme of building more homes, including affordable homes, homes for sale, so that there are suitable and affordable housing options for all ages, households, and income levels;
- delivering homes that are accessible and attractive to older people and those with long-term disabilities, as well as specialist housing with care offer as an alternative to institutional care;
- move away from a hostel-based temporary housing offer to a Housing First approach to respond to residents who experience homelessness and severe and multiple disadvantages, and
- Increase the investment opportunities into council owned housing in the face of increased demand and inflationary challenges

The Housing Strategy will also recognise and complement the city's ambitions captured within the Inclusive Economic Strategy that we launched earlier this year.

Planning

Planning is a statutory service. The service has responsibility for providing our Development Management service, a planning enforcement service; preparing our statutory Local Plan; and delivering urban design, conservation, and archaeology services. Planning provides a range of advice and services aimed at delivering an integrated one-stop-shop approach to facilitating the delivery of quality development in the city. The service also manages the historic environment and provides advice on works within our conservation (areas and the city's portfolio of listed buildings).

Planning role is to create policy and guidance, make decisions on planning and building regulation applications, unlocking barriers to delivery, coordinating infrastructure delivery, securing funding, enforcing against breaches of regulations, monitoring what is happening, helping our communities plan for their places and providing a good service to our customers.

Development Management

Over the past year, the planning department received 1,910 planning applications and 209 pre-apps. **80% of major application** were determined within 13 weeks or agreed extensions of time, **73% of minors** were determined within 8 weeks. Overall, 79% of applications met the statutory planning timescales.

Several strategic applications were taken to planning committee this year. Full planning permission was granted in August 2022 for the demolition and re-build of the West Denton pool/leisure centre. Funded through a near £20m grant awarded after a bid to the Government's Levelling Up Fund, the project will deliver a new two storey, 5,602 square metre facility to serve the outer west of the city. It will provide a 25m 8 lane pool, a 17m trainer pool, aqua play pool, multi-use sports hall, fitness studios/ gym, library, community rooms, café, children's soft play area, and associated offices and changing facilities.

An outline planning permission was minded to grant by Planning Committee in February 2023 for Great Park Extension Site, subject to completing a section 106 legal agreement. The application was for the development of 900 new homes, 15% of which on-site will be affordable, a new primary school, local retail centre and associated open space and landscaping. The section 106 agreement will secure over £10m to help fund on and near site infrastructure improvements, including funding toward highway works and healthcare improvements. Negotiations to finalise the section 106 are nearing conclusion at which point the scheme can be approved.

We received **£14,905,529** of contributions from 11 signed Section 106 agreements covering major residential and commercial planning permissions across the city. These contributions which are secured to mitigate the impact of development on their locality must be used in line with their respective legal agreements. These contributions were received for off-site provision of council-led affordable housing; new or extended education facilities; transportation improvements to the highway network including

junction improvements, pedestrian and cycle links and bus services; green infrastructure improvements including open spaces, ecology, and wildlife; children's play improvements, and new or extended sports provision.

During 2202-23, **£6,424,903** of Section 106 contributions were expended through Delegated Decisions on the provision of new a primary school at Newcastle Great Park and an extension to Kingston Park Primary; highways/junction improvements serving the Strategic Land Release sites , children's play improvements in line with the City Councils Playground Improvement programme; Council led affordable housing provision across the city; and employment and skills training through Council led initiatives. We also secured **£120,345** of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding from three approved CIL liable developments. Future expenditure will be on major infrastructure to serve development such as highways junctions, strategic flooding, education improvements and major built sports facilities.

The Infrastructure Funding Statement 2021-22 (IFS) was published in December 2022. The statement sets out the income and expenditure relating to the city's community infrastructure levy (CIL) and section 106 (S106) agreements for 2021-22 and as required by the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Regulations Amended 2019.

Planning Enforcement

The Planning Enforcement team continue to investigate a wide variety of planning breaches and we are assessing how the enforcement functions of various departments can work together to ensure we provide a coordinated approach to enforcement issues across the Council. This will also involve clear public signposting to make it clearer to residents who they need to contact. **230 enforcement cases** were opened this year.

Planning Policy

We continue to monitor data and trend and prepare planning policy guidance which responds to our circumstance and challenges. Over the last year we have gathered evidence and data and consulted on a scoping report for a new Healthier Food Environments supplementary planning document and we will consult on a publication draft Healthier Food Environments Supplementary Planning Document later this year.

We have started earlier preparation on the new Newcastle Plan. Work has commenced preparing the evidence base and collating necessary data. Earlier this year, we undertook *A Call for Sites* to find out what sites are available for development across the city. This work has informed an early consultation report on the Newcastle Plan which will be discussed with Cabinet later this year.

The planning service continues to respond to the governments planning reform agenda and digitising the service. We were successful at being awarded £386,000 in top up funding from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) to continue our work on *Open Digital Planning (ODP)*. The funding provides the opportunity

for us to continue our work with ODP to explore ways to modernise planning software. We are also working with partners to support greater automation and integration between the existing development management software and other software products. This aims to reduce the time taken to manually process information and expedite planning applications more quickly.

Urban Design and Conservation

Our team continues to manage the historic and built environment through the Planning system and through its ownership of many historic buildings, sites, and structures. Organised the Lord Mayor Design Awards, Commemorative Blue Plaques and Heritage Open Days and continued to preserve historic buildings such as Grainger Market.

Planning

To deliver our planning services we need to work towards digitisation of some services, making information and data more easily accessible, making this easily available on our website, enabling self-service where possible. We will be considering government planning reforms which are expected to be introduced from Autumn 2023. The reforms will present both opportunities and challenges as we seek to meet the government's changing requirements for Development Management, Local Plan making and infrastructure.

We are committed to making the planning process easier to navigate. From discussions with our residents, and developers across the city we know the current process can be challenging. We know that homeowners wanting to make improvements or housing developers building new homes the experience may seem long and confusing with many hoops to jump through, working with challenging software, and waiting time built into the process.

We are continuing to work with government, other local planning authorities, software developers and users of the service to understand how we can enable everyone to better engage with the planning system. Our efforts are focused on creating more efficient digital systems, making data more open and accessible to improve our customer's experience and to save time and money for our residents and developers. While legislation underpinning this approach is now in Parliament as part of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill, the pilots and services are already being developed and will be tested in Newcastle over the coming months as we iterate and develop improvements to meet the needs of residents and developers.

Building Control

Providing statutory services of building regulations administration and enforcement, assessing risk to public safety posed by reported dangerous structures certification of safety at sports grounds, and regulation of street naming and numbering among other services.

Over the past year the service dealt with 1070 building regulation applications, with 82% processed within statutory timescales. A total of 7203 building regulation site inspections were undertaken, with 98% of visits conducted on the date of customer request.

Looking Ahead to 2023–24

I am pleased to see so much of the work undertaken in the past year yield positive results, but our focus remains on ensuring our great city is an inclusive one, where everyone has the same access to opportunities.

In 2023–24 our teams will continue to work with residents, community groups, businesses, voluntary and education sector organisations, and other stakeholders to:

- Introduce a new 5-year Licensing Policy
- Review smoke control orders in the city to help deal with the control of fine particles
- Review of selective licencing areas and consult on possible determinations.
- Take action against those that seek to exploit the vulnerable
- Implement new legislation on the use of single use plastics
- Continue the inspection programme for high rise buildings and asylum accommodation.
- Show a zero tolerance to those that are responsible for littering and fly tipping
- Review how we manage our own stock and develop a new housing strategy for the city.
- Continue to delivery an efficient and effective planning service and meet statutory planning performance targets.
- Start the conversation by consulting on the New Newcastle Plan, a planning framework for the city to 2045.
- Publish supplementary planning guidance on Healthier Food Environments, guidance on Pavement Café, and adopt the Local Development Scheme, Statement of Community Involvement and Householder Design Guidance
- Respond to the government planning reform agenda.

Appendix One: Statutory and Non-statutory Requirements

Integrated Services

We deliver a range of statutory functions for preventing and responding to homelessness including our duties to:

- provide information and advice about homelessness
- carry out inquiries if there is reason to believe someone is homeless or threatened with homelessness
- take reasonable steps to help the applicant secure accommodation (prevention duty)
- take reasonable steps to help the applicant secure that accommodation becomes available for at least 6 months (relief duty)
- provide interim accommodation while carrying out inquiries
- support people in priority need but who are intentionally homeless
- notify the applicant when a homelessness duty is owed to them
- to carry out a homelessness review and publish a homelessness strategy

Public Safety and Regulation

We deliver a range of statutory functions and regulatory activity to protect residents, businesses and visitors, tackle causes of environmental harm, support the economy, and ensure our air is clean, food is fit to eat, workplaces are safe, and companies trade fairly. Below are some of the major pieces of legislation we have statutory responsibility for enforcing:

- Environment Act 1995 – Air Quality
- Environmental Protection Act 1990 – nuisance, contaminated land, waste and littering
- Environment Act 2021
- Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003
- Food Safety Act 1990
- Local Government Act 2000 and Food Safety and Hygiene (England) Regulations 2013
- Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984
- Health and Safety at Work, etc. Act 1974
- Health Act 2006 – smoke free legislation
- Licensing Act 2003
- Gambling Act 2005
- Marriage & Civil Partnerships (Approved Premises) Regulations 2005
- Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982*

- Consumer Protection Act 1987 and General Product Safety Regulations 2005*
- Weights and Measures Act 1985
- Animal Welfare Act 2006
- General Product Safety Regulations 2005
- Building Safety Act 2022
- The Fire Safety Act 2021
- Housing Acts 1985, 1988, 1996 and 2004
- Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES) 2018
- Tenants Fees Act 2019
- The Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998

Housing

During the past year there have been significant changes in legislation relating to housing which have implication for the Council including.

- **The Supported Housing Regulatory Oversight Act 2023** contains a number of measures to bring better regulation and oversight to the supported housing sector, including the requirement for local authorities in England to review supported housing in their areas and to develop a rolling 5-year strategy
- **The Social Housing Act 2023**, introduced to:
 - strengthening the Regulator of Social Housing to carry out regular inspections of the largest social housing providers and the power to issue unlimited fines to rogue social landlords
 - additional Housing Ombudsman powers to publish best practice guidance to landlords following investigations into tenant complaints
 - powers to set strict time limits for social landlords to address hazards such as damp and mould
 - new qualification requirements for social housing managers
 - introducing stronger economic powers to follow inappropriate money transactions outside of the sector.
- **Building Safety Act 2022** came into force from 1st April 2023 introduces new duties for the management of fire and building safety in high-rise residential buildings. It is one of several pieces of legislation and guidance being implemented by the Government to enhance Building Safety, including the Fire Safety Act 2021.
- **The Fire Safety Act 2021** amends the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, which deals with fire safety in buildings – including clarifying the role of the Responsible Person in managing fire safety.

Other statutory legislation includes:

- Housing Act 1985,

- Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996
- Housing Act 1996 (Part 6),
- Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES) 2018
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- Housing Act 2004
- The Licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation Order 2018
- Prevention of Illegal Eviction from and Unlawful Occupation of Land Act, 1998
- The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017
- Tenants Fees Act 2019
- The Housing Act 1988
- The Prevention of Social Housing Fraud Act 2013
- The Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998

Planning

There is a statutory duty placed on local authorities to deliver a Planning service that administers the legislative requirements of the:

- Town and Country Planning Act 1990,
- Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act 1990.
- Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004
- Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981
- Localism Act 2011
- Environment Act 2021

All planning decisions need to be made in accordance with the Statutory Development Plan and other material consideration. For Newcastle the Statutory Development plan currently consists of the Newcastle and Gateshead Core Strategy and Urban Core Plan which was approved in 2015 and the Development and Allocations Plan which was approved in 2020.