

Clerk Name: Mark Hamill
Clerk Telephone: 07811294702
Clerk Email: committee@northlan.gov.ukk



27 May 2025

**Members of the
Policy and Strategy Committee**

Chief Executive's Office

Rachel Blair
Chief Officer (Legal & Democratic)
Civic Centre, Windmillhill Street,
Motherwell ML1 1AB
www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk

Notice is given that a Meeting of the **Policy and Strategy Committee** is to be held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Windmillhill Street, Motherwell, ML1 1AB on Thursday, 05 June 2025 at 14:00 PM which you are requested to attend.

The agenda of business is attached.

Rachel Blair
Chief Officer (Legal & Democratic)

Members :

J Logue, T Fisher, L Roarty, C Barclay, A Beveridge, H Brannan-McVey, A Bustard, T Carragher, C Costello, P Di Mascio, K Duffy, W Goldie, D Johnston, J Leckie, G Lennon, H Loughran, M McBride, M McPake, L Nolan, G Robinson, A Smith, A Stubbs, R Sullivan, S Watson, G Woods.

Agenda

- 1 **Declarations of Interest In Terms of the Ethical Standards In Public Life Etc. (Scotland) Act 2000**

Operational

- 2 **Annual Communications Review and Evaluation** 5 - 54
Submit report by the Chief Officer (Strategy and Engagement) setting out the annual update.
- 3 **Leadership and Operating Model - Phase 2 progress update** 55 - 96
Submit report by the Chief Officer (Strategy and Engagement) (1) providing an update on the progress of the Leadership and Operating Model over the last 6 months; (2) advising of the service uptake in the Community Hubs; and (3) seeking approval of the plans and direction set out in the report.
- 4 **Demonstrating Best Value in Transformation** 97 - 120
Submit report by the Chief Officer (Strategy and Engagement) (1) providing an update on the audit of transformation and the evidence provided; and (2) highlighting the national approach to auditing Best Value, the theme of transformation for the year three Best Value audit work, and the context and evidence put forward by the council to support the audit.
- 5 **City Deal Programme - East Airdrie Link Road Update** 121 - 132
Submit report by the Chief Officer (Place) (1) detailing the progress made to date on the East Airdrie Link Road; (2) highlighting the next key milestones; and (3) seeking approval to include the Towers Road link within the East Airdrie Link Road Project.

Financial

- 6 **UK Shared Prosperity Fund - Annual Update 2024-25** 133 - 148
Submit report by the Chief Officer (Place) (1) providing an update on the progress in implementing the Shared Prosperity Fund; and (2) detailing the range of activities and outcomes that the UKSPF has supported over the last three years.

- | | | |
|---|--|-----------|
| 7 | Accounts Commission Briefing – Local Government Budgets 2025-26
Submit report by the Chief Officer (Finance and Technology) (1) detailing the Scottish Government funding for local government in 2025/26; and (2) highlighting the recurring financial pressures faced by Councils. | 149 - 154 |
| 8 | 5 Year Medium Term Financial Plan 2026-27 to 2030-31
Submit report by the Chief Officer (Finance and Technology) (1) seeking approval of the updated five-year medium term financial forecast up to 2030/31; and (2) outlining the challenges faced by the Council in maintaining medium term financial stability, whilst achieving the strategic priorities of the Council. | 155 - 174 |

North Lanarkshire Council Report

Policy and Strategy Committee

Does this report require to be approved?

☐ Yes ☒ No

Ref CC/SP

Date

05/06/25

Annual Communications Review and Evaluation

From Stephen Penman, Chief Officer (Strategy and Engagement)

E-mail PenmanSte@northlan.gov.uk

Telephone 07947 997750

Executive Summary

Following approval of the Communications and Engagement Strategy by the Policy and Strategy Committee in May 2024, a full programme of communications activities, campaigns and projects has been undertaken over the last year to support the ambitions outlined in The Plan for North Lanarkshire and the deliverables aligned with the new five-year Programme of Work.

As outlined in the 'measuring success' element of the agreed strategy, all major communications and engagement activity is reviewed and evaluated to ensure alignment with The Plan for North Lanarkshire and the Programme of Work and to demonstrate effectiveness, positive outcomes and impacts.

The associated review and evaluation is appended to this report.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Policy and Strategy Committee:

- (1) Acknowledges the significant communications work undertaken during 2024/25.
- (2) Otherwise notes the contents of the report.

The Plan for North Lanarkshire

Priority	All priorities
Ambition statement	All ambition statements
Programme of Work	All Programmes of Work

1. Background

- 1.1 The Policy and Strategy Committee approved a five-year Communication and Engagement Strategy in May 2024. As part of the implementation of the strategy, the Chief Officer (Strategy and Engagement) is required to present an annual communications evaluation to the committee for approval.
- 1.2 Annual review and evaluation reports for communications activity have demonstrated the value, benefits and effectiveness of good, multi-disciplinary communications since the inception of The Plan for North Lanarkshire.
- 1.3 As outlined in the Communication and Engagement Strategy, an annual review and evaluation of communications activity is crucial to demonstrate effectiveness and performance of the service. The evaluation report links the outputs and outcomes generated by Corporate Communications to improved service delivery and positive impacts for residents, communities and businesses. All activity is aligned to key themes in The Plan for North Lanarkshire and the Programme of Work, as well as regular council business.

2. Report

- 2.1 It should be noted that the annual plan evaluation does not contain all communications activity over 2024-25. It summarises significant communications activity relevant to The Plan for North Lanarkshire and the Programme of Work, as well as other campaigns and communications activity with a clear focus on outputs and positive outcomes for people, communities and businesses.
- 2.2 The evaluation incorporates an overview of the communications activity in 2024-25, key annual highlights and narrative around how communications has supported services, council policies and the current programme of work and how they align with The Plan for North Lanarkshire. This review also incorporates an overview of the operating model for communications going forward.
- 2.3 In line with the overarching communications strategy, all major activity must support either a Programme of Work, or an ambition statement, which aligns with the core narrative supporting the Live, Learn, Work, Invest and Visit brand strategy.
- 2.4 Much of the focus for communications activity over the last year has been on supporting specific projects within the seven Programmes of Work, as well as ongoing campaigns aligned to The Plan for North Lanarkshire. It should be noted that communications support for committee business, civic activities and functional services are standard operations and may not be included in the evaluation.
- 2.5 Several key issues that required significant communications support are highlighted in the report, specifically Storm Eowyn, the first red weather warning in Central Scotland in over a decade, the impact of Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete on a range of services and management of communications around the UK General Election.
- 2.6 All campaigns that have been evaluated will be shared and discussed with services across the council to ensure they inform service changes or improvements. Evaluations will inform future campaigns and phases of campaigns to ensure a robust demonstration of the outcomes which can be achieved by excellent communication activity. Key achievements include:

- The promotion of the refurbished library at Motherwell contributed to an increase in visitor numbers by almost 11% in 2024/25.
- Open Market Purchase Scheme campaign saw a 569 increase in click-throughs to the dedicated webpage which generated a 57% increase in applications, resulting in 83 properties purchased.
- A specially designed exhibition to promote the future of Cumbernauld Town Centre realised 439 individual engagements with officers, 263 survey responses and 1,667 hits to the webpage.
- The multi-channel Sum it Up numeracy campaign generated impressive results with more than 450 individuals supported to date, 360 learners registered for Scottish Qualifications and 283 achieving SQA qualifications.
- After creating a compelling brand and look to The Hive women's business incubator, the dynamic campaign drove 444 online registrations, 1,424 hours of workspace bookings over the year and importantly, helped create 31 new female-led businesses.
- The modern apprentice campaign saw a rise of 672% in applications compared to the previous year.
- Work to promote the NL Employer Charter generated 7.7 million impressions, resulting in 49,000 click-throughs to the webpage, video adverts fully viewed 53,000 times and we now have 62 employers registered to become accredited charter members.
- As a result of activity to promote the Working For Families programme, 680 parents have now registered, with 206 securing employment, 152 gaining work placements and 228 attaining qualifications.
- The range of campaign work to support people struggling with the cost of living, included supporting Challenge Poverty Week, which saw the tackling poverty team assisting 1,992 individuals, addressing over £6.4 million of debt (an annual increase of 14%), as well as requests for benefit checks rising by over 41% and welfare rights referrals increased by 25%, generating nearly £48 million in additional benefit income for North Lanarkshire residents.
- The campaign to promote North Lanarkshire as an attractive base for business saw the videos attract 4.4 million impressions, 28,000 clicks-throughs to the Invest in North Lanarkshire website, generating 54 enquiries from interested businesses.
- The period products campaign webpage has been visited 20,000 times and the animation has been viewed 105,000 times. When polled (2025), 91% of women said they were aware of the service and 82% said they had seen the service advertised, which is testament to the power of the campaign's reach.
- A campaign to address under-reporting of domestic abuse from women over 50 reached 53,000 women, gaining 441k impressions on Facebook/Instagram and 667 link clicks to the adult protection webpage outlining support services available to them. Aura reported an uptick in women contacting them, with 50 looking for support.
- The innovative North Lanarkshire Stories Trail created and produced by the team across 10 locations has seen 20,000 visits to the webpage in the six months since launch and almost 1,000 interactions with the QR codes at locations.
- The campaign to promote the annual pantomime at a new venue saw ticket sales rise by 34%, the promotion of Easter sports camps saw sales rise by 14% and compelling campaigns promoting leisure saw gym memberships grow overall by 16.5%, from 30,048 in 2024 to 35,021 in 2025.
- The promotion and creation of two themed fanzone events at Broadwood Stadium on the back of Scotland's national football team reaching the UEFA European Championships, saw both 5,000-capacity events sold out.

- 2.7 There is a continued focus on linking internal communication activity with the council's overall strategy, ensuring staff can be ambassadors for the council's work and feel informed about major priorities. This was central to the organisation of a series of

roadshow events to promote the ambition and delivery of The Plan for North Lanarkshire and the Programme of Work. A total of 75 events took place across 42 different venues with 2,630 attendees, and feedback demonstrating that the roadshow was relevant, informative and dynamic.

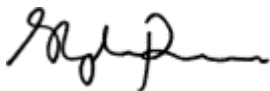
- 2.8 The challenges facing communications from the emergence and increased use of AI, automation, changing communication technology and algorithms and an increasingly fragmented social media landscape are acknowledged in the report, with a commitment to shaping and embracing them into the operating model for Corporate Communications over the next few years.

3. Measures of success

- 3.1 Measures of success are evidenced through communications outputs and outcomes aligned to projects and activity within The Plan for North Lanarkshire and the Programme of Work as outlined in the appended report.

4. Supporting documentation

- 4.1 Appendix One: Communications Plan Evaluation



Stephen Penman
Chief Officer, (Strategy and Engagement)

5. Impacts

5.1 Public Sector Equality Duty and Fairer Scotland Duty Does the report contain information that has an impact as a result of the Public Sector Equality Duty and/or Fairer Scotland Duty? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact? If Yes, has an assessment been carried out and published on the council's website? https://www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/your-community/equalities/equality-and-fairer-scotland-duty-impact-assessments Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
5.2 Financial impact Does the report contain any financial impacts? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If Yes, have all relevant financial impacts been discussed and agreed with Finance? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?
5.3 HR policy impact Does the report contain any HR policy or procedure impacts? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If Yes, have all relevant HR impacts been discussed and agreed with People Resources? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?
5.4 Legal impact Does the report contain any legal impacts (such as general legal matters, statutory considerations (including employment law considerations), or new legislation)? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If Yes, have all relevant legal impacts been discussed and agreed with Legal and Democratic? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?
5.5 Data protection impact Does the report / project / practice contain or involve the processing of personal data? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If Yes, is the processing of this personal data likely to result in a high risk to the data subject? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If Yes, has a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) been carried out and e-mailed to dataprotection@northlan.gov.uk Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
5.6 Technology / Digital impact Does the report contain information that has an impact on either technology, digital transformation, service redesign / business change processes, data management, or connectivity / broadband / Wi-Fi? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?

	<p>Where the impact identifies a requirement for significant technology change, has an assessment been carried out (or is scheduled to be carried out) by the Enterprise Architecture Governance Group (EAGG)?</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p>
5.7	<p>Environmental / Carbon impact</p> <p>Does the report / project / practice contain information that has an impact on any environmental or carbon matters?</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?</p>
5.8	<p>Communications impact</p> <p>Does the report contain any information that has an impact on the council's communications activities?</p> <p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact? Provides an overview of the positive impact on communities, people and businesses in North Lanarkshire through communications activity.</p>
5.9	<p>Risk impact</p> <p>Is there a risk impact?</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the key risks and potential impacts, highlighting where the risk(s) are assessed and recorded (e.g. Corporate or Service or Project Risk Registers), and how they are managed?</p>
5.10	<p>Armed Forces Covenant Duty</p> <p>Does the report require to take due regard of the Armed Forces Covenant Duty (i.e. does it relate to healthcare, housing, or education services for in-Service or ex-Service personnel, or their families, or widow(er)s)?</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the provision which has been made to ensure there has been appropriate consideration of the particular needs of the Armed Forces community to make sure that they do not face disadvantage compared to other citizens in the provision of public services.</p>
5.11	<p>Children's rights and wellbeing impact</p> <p>Does the report contain any information regarding any council activity, service delivery, policy, or plan that has an impact on children and young people up to the age of 18, or on a specific group of these?</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact and the provision that has been made to ensure there has been appropriate consideration of the relevant Articles from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).</p> <p>If Yes, has a Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment (CRWIA) been carried out?</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p>



communications plan evaluation 2024 - 2025



LIVE
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INVEST
VISIT

This is the annual review and evaluation of communications and engagement for North Lanarkshire Council 2024-25.

The evaluation incorporates an overview of the communications activity last year (2024-25), key annual highlights and narrative around how communications has supported services, council policies and the current programme of work.

As a communications service, we continue to navigate a changing media and digital landscape, which brings challenges around misinformation, AI, citizen journalism and an ever-evolving relationship between algorithms, data and analytics. Ensuring that council content is authentic, informative and engaging, is crucial to maintaining genuine relationships with communities, partners and staff, together with the council's communications ethos to be open and transparent.

In terms of communities, more targeted engagement using local news has proved to be effective, as well as encouraging communities to advocate good news and activity from the council and its partners locally. The role of communities is changing, with more demands from individuals and families on council services. Much of our campaign messaging inspires individuals to take proactive steps to improve their lives and continued communications should assist in developing relationships with communities by delivering meaningful, relevant and credible information for residents and businesses.

The importance of quality content has never been more important to foster community engagement and using storytelling to explain what The Plan for North Lanarkshire and the consequent benefits are for people, communities and business.

Substantial projects and programmes are underway across North Lanarkshire which are already seeing transformational change to town centres, improved infrastructure and continued investment in business and people; generating increased productivity, pay and jobs. Many of these activities are focused on the most vulnerable people in communities, providing more opportunities for employability, training or other support.

In addition, major events that took place last year required significant support from communications, including the UK-wide issue of Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC), the UK general election, Storm Eowyn and the three-month Plan for North Lanarkshire staff roadshow.

Our work this year centres around three core areas: key highlights, The Plan for North Lanarkshire and its associated Programme of Work (communications support for specific programmes are highlighted throughout this document) and key projects that support how North Lanarkshire is the place to live, learn, work, invest and visit.

LIVE
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The story

This is North Lanarkshire.

The place to Live, Learn, Work, Invest, and Visit.

It's a place where residents, communities and businesses have been affected by the coronavirus pandemic but one that can and will recover.

It's our vision, our shared ambition. It's what We Aspire to achieve.

Our ambitious plans are already underway for social and economic regeneration and growth that benefits everyone in North Lanarkshire. We are already responding to major social, economic and technological change.

We are improving the lives of everyone who lives, learn, works, invests or visits here by driving inclusive economic growth, increasing skills and generating jobs and training opportunities. In doing this, we will reduce poverty and inequality.

We work in partnership to achieve this and we involve people in communities in what we do. We share our ambitions with them.

We have big ideas and the vision to achieve them.

LIVE HERE

North Lanarkshire has welcoming, vibrant towns. Places where people want to live.

We have a history, but a much bigger future.

We have a great mix of housing, facilities and services. We're transforming our town centres. We're helping people live for longer in their own homes. We're improving transport links.

These are happy, connected, safe and resilient communities.



LEARN HERE

All young people in North Lanarkshire can achieve their full potential. They have the tools to make their way in life through quality, exciting, and challenging learning. That means improving attainment and closing the poverty-related attainment gap.

Learners of all ages have the skills to take advantage of the employment opportunities our growing economy brings. We have a flexible, resilient and skilled workforce for the future.

Everyone has access to quality learning and teaching. We make sure our schools are inclusive, energetic places which take into account the needs of all our young people. Young people have experiences which last a lifetime and a voice in their own learning.



WORK HERE

We have a dynamic, diverse and growing economy with a great mix of small, medium-sized and large businesses.

People in North Lanarkshire are connected to employment and have the support they need to access jobs. They have skills appropriate to the needs of employers. They are supported, no matter their background, personal needs or economic circumstances.

We provide great places to work, with engaged, ambitious people who are ambassadors for the services they provide.



INVEST HERE

North Lanarkshire is the best location for business. There are excellent transport links across Scotland and the UK, a strong employment market, a skilled workforce and flexible land and premises. There is an effective digital infrastructure.

Businesses have the support to grow and succeed, to develop new products and markets and to create and secure new jobs.

Existing businesses have the help they need and North Lanarkshire is attractive to new employers. Residents have job opportunities and our economy will continue to grow in a way that benefits all local people.



VISIT HERE

North Lanarkshire is the place to visit and play. Our tourism sector is growing with improved opportunities and better attractions and events.

We offer distinctive, authentic experiences which provide value for money and are accessible to all. Investment is generated by achieving the right mix of events hosted here, bringing additional money into the local economy and supporting jobs and business. We are building on our reputation for hosting world class events.

This is a place for active, healthy lives. A place where the right facilities are in the places they're needed. A place to enjoy.



Corporate Communications Production Overview 2024/25

Strategic Communication

Corporate Communications sits within the wider Strategy and Engagement service, providing enhanced opportunities to engage with the public through interdependent services: the community partnership team, customer service hub and leadership and operating model. With strategy and customer experience joining in 2025/26, strengthened engagement with residents and businesses can be explored.

The range of communications activities is far-reaching and diverse and requires insight, coordination and direction in order to deliver a quality service. Much of this work is planned, some is reactive.

But our approach is always professional, structured and embedded in strategic thinking. Some highlights of the year are outlined below.



Storm Eowyn

A rare red weather warning in January 2025 saw schools, workplaces, transport and shops close as Storm Eowyn wreaked havoc on North Lanarkshire due to winds up to 100mph. The Met Office warning claimed there could be a risk to life due to flying debris, fallen trees and damage to buildings.

Following the initial Corporate Resilience Management Team/gold command meeting, decisions were made about services, including meeting closures of schools, leisure facilities and other impacts such as domestic bin collections. The council has well-developed plans for severe weather and the team worked closely with its communications partners through local, regional and national resilience arrangements.

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Corporate Communications immediately stepped up, pulling together a crisis response team, creating a dedicated webpage on the council website with

and businesses, such as road closures. The webpage was the central source of the most up to date information and provided clarity, reassurance and authenticity, with over 3,000 hits and almost 2,000 unique users visiting the page.

We also created a partner checklist, where we identified helpful information from partners including Police Scotland, Transport Scotland, Scottish Government and Scottish Fire and Rescue, that could be beneficial to residents and staff on the day of the storm. The team checked for key issues such as power, fallen trees, road closures and flood alerts, and shared anything appropriate on our social media channels and web page.

The team worked over the four days of the storm, liaising with contacts at key services to get the latest information to promote service updates. There were over 500 incidents reported on fallen trees and messaging was devised to reduce multiple reports

and to manage resident expectations on clear-ups, with roads a priority. A local primary school was impacted into the next operational week and communications were issued to parents/carers to keep them updated of learning arrangements.

On social media, there were 1,216,886 impressions across all channels, 26,612 engagements, with Facebook proving to have most cut-through with 994,451 impressions and 11,108 engagements. Email was also particularly effective, with four bulletins issued to 144,982 recipients in total, which were opened 118,228 times, generating an average open rate of 53.5%.

Our social media channels received a number of comments from residents expressing their gratitude for the flow of updated information over the days of the storm and its aftermath.



Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC)



The UK-wide issue of RAAC unfolded at the tail end of 2023 with the material being identified in the majority of the roof at the Motherwell Concert Hall and Theatre following a review of the corporate estate. The immediacy of the issue was highlighted due to some of the RAAC panels being damaged by water ingress, resulting in the immediate closure of the venue for safety reasons. This required a series of communications to alert current and future ticket holders of the change of venue for many of the performances to Airdrie Town Hall, with the showcase performance of the annual Christmas pantomime moved to Ravenscraig Regional Sports Facility for the second time.

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To be as open and transparent as possible, a dedicated webpage was set up with information on what facilities have been affected and what the council is doing to address any issues. This page is constantly updated with the latest information and received almost 2,000 page views over the year.

Ongoing assessments are being carried out on council housing, with communications underway to the very small number of residents affected. This remains an ongoing communications activity for the team to ensure that the council is doing everything it can to make buildings, facilities and homes as safe as possible.



UK General Election

Corporate Communications has an important role to play in the running of elections, both national and local.

We provided communications support for the UK General Election in July 2024, which included specific pre-election guidance for officers and other staff to ensure they were aware of restrictions throughout this period. Ahead of the General Election in July, the key message was the need for residents to have appropriate voter ID; the first time this was needed for an election in Scotland.

Information was posted regularly on social media, using information from the Electoral Commission, highlighting different types of ID and how to apply for alternative free ID. The message was also included in news releases, GovDelivery emails, staff newsletter and on the web site as part of the overall communications plan for the election.

We carried out promotional activity to encourage residents to register to vote and for a postal vote, as well as encouraging residents to go to the polls to cast their vote.

Given the timing of the elections, during the summer school holidays in Scotland, issues began to arise around the postal vote. A small number of the 45,000 postal voters in the area had not received their postal voting pack and we were able to quickly identify and communicate arrangements to provide a replacement for affected voters.

We worked with national broadcast media to ensure coverage of the election count was delivered effectively, and immediate updates following the announcements of

new MPs were communicated on a wide range of media channels.

The General Election resulted in by-elections in two council wards in October. We supported the election team again to provide residents with the information they need to use their vote.



Budget Engagement 2024/25

Although meaningful and effective consultation on local authority budgets is difficult to achieve for a range of reasons, including the complexity and extent of services, unconscious bias on the part of participants and the consequent difficulties stemming from asking people to value one service over another. Following on from an exceptional response rate to our quantitative survey in 23/24, our team procured a research agency to build on this insight. For a qualitative perspective, the agency created a series of focus groups and in-depth interviews to provide resident insight on their understanding of council services and finances.

There were three elements to this work: a desk review of previous budget research and budget decisions carried out by the council, five community days (where independent, external researchers engaged directly with residents within communities) and group discussion sessions. The fieldwork was carried out in November and December 2024. The total sample was 101 respondents, which is considered an excellent qualitative sample for this work and included residents from all nine community board areas.

The research demonstrated that people find it difficult to discuss council finances, particularly the detail for each service. However, overwhelmingly, respondents were keen to see services preserved without further cuts, and investment in the future of services and in the regeneration of North Lanarkshire, along with strong leadership which will fight to protect services. There was a desire that the council should make efficiencies, change the way it delivers services, and innovate before cutting services.

People thought it important that the council had demonstrable values around ensuring that the most vulnerable people were not disproportionately impacted by any cuts.

Consultation and engagement on budgets is notoriously difficult for local government, and this qualitative research only strengthens that perception. A report was provided to elected members to assist with making budget decisions that included the findings of the qualitative research, as well as the quantitative research carried out the previous year, which still has relevance.



Campaigns and Media

Our media team dealt with **320 enquiries**, provided **43 statements** and issued **300 news releases** over **2024-25**, produced and posted **131 videos** to support proactive stories, tweeted **795 times**, compiled **798 Facebook posts**, **278 on LinkedIn**, **69 photographs on Instagram** and **71 videos on TikTok**, generating a wealth of coverage in traditional and digital media.

Preparing media responses and advice for residents in relation to news items or incidents, including Storm Eowyn, council tax and budget or incidents and issues stemming from external and internal political, economic and social events, are core activities. Media interest can exacerbate issues, and social media can fuel misinformation and incongruous sentiment among communities. It is important that communications are timely, open and valid, in order to clarify facts for people or to provide reassurance of action being taken.

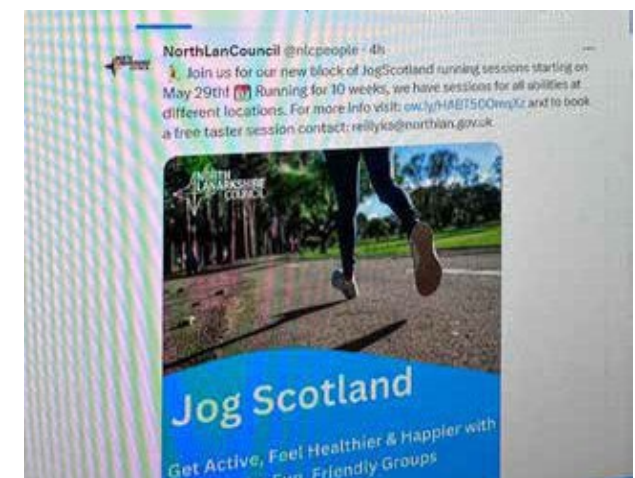
Important advice was issued to residents and businesses following a chemical spillage in Coatbridge and reassurance messaging was provided to the community following unfounded concerns at The Time Capsule. A global IT outage linked to an external provider that affected organisations around the world impacted on

some card payments for council services including leisure centres. The team quickly issued information on social media, as well as to staff operating the payment systems.

The team also liaised closely with NHS Lanarkshire public health over a very small public health outbreak in a town, providing communications support, letters for parents and promotion of vaccination clinics.

Continued pressure from parent/carer groups regarding the changes to school transportation limits, led to

significant media enquiries. A later change in policy was agreed by the council to remove the previously agreed changes limits in the coming year for primary-aged pupils only and this was welcomed by parents and carers across the region.





Read all about it

In January 2024 we worked with the libraries team to promote the opening of the newly-refurbished Motherwell Library. Key to this was launching an appeal to find the family of a Scottish woman who left more than £350,000 to two Lanarkshire libraries - decades after she emigrated to the US.

This story gained national attention with both STV and BBC news covering the story as well as national and local newspapers and radio.

The refurbished library is proving popular with local people with visitor numbers up almost 11% in 2024/25, compared with the previous year and the number of items borrowed up 14.5% over the same period.



North Lanarkshire's own Billy Elliot, Scottish ballet star Reece Clarke, returned to perform in his hometown in August.

He took to the stage at Airdrie Town Hall along with fellow Royal Ballet dancers.

The media team worked closely with colleagues from Active and Creative Communities as well as sponsors Albert Bartlett to secure national coverage of his presentation to pupils at Airdrie Academy including BBC Reporting Scotland and STV.

The sell-out shows celebrated Reece's journey from local talent to international ballet sensation, with proceeds supporting The Guide Dogs charity.



The Plan for North Lanarkshire PROGRAMME OF WORK >>>

TRANSFORMING PLACES

Housing

Our new council house building programme forms part of the council's overall vision to transform communities and town centres as places where people want to live. This year, the target to deliver new homes by 2035 increased to 6,000, with a total of 2,393 delivered to date and 278 this year alone.

We promoted key milestones including new sites, builds in progress and completed developments, together with showcasing the quality of our homes, their eco-friendly features, and tenants' stories.



We issued newsletters via email to 10,361 residents facilitated interviews for local and national media to highlight significant milestones including tenants' testimonials and explained how the council is transforming derelict properties in town centres into quality homes, inciting local pride. Video undoubtedly generated an increase in likes and shares online while raising awareness of our investment, ambition and life changing new homes.

We used local channels to promote completion of various energy efficiency and renewable technology projects across the area, focussing on happy tenants and outlining the improvements, investment and benefits.

These include the installation of EV charging pillars to support the move to electric vehicles, the availability of cycle parking and more recently supporting a Ministerial Visit, to a development at Brandon Street, Motherwell, to showcase a ground source heat pump system.

A dedicated campaign to promote the Open Market Purchase Scheme, which aims to tackle homelessness, increase the supply of affordable housing and bring back long-term empty properties back into use was successful. Consistent messaging and targeted promotion highlighted the benefits of the scheme for local communities, private sellers and landlords. Our campaign saw an 837% increase in page views, 10426 impressions from Google search ads with an impressive CTR of 13.25% and importantly, a massive 569% jump in click-throughs to the dedicated webpage to 897 last year. This generated a 57% increase in applications which saw 83 properties purchased (of which 34 were long-term empty homes), contributing to 836 homes secured since the scheme's launch in 2013.



CityDeal

2024 saw the 10th anniversary of Glasgow City Region City Deal which we marked with communications highlighting the progress to date and the benefits to the economy and local communities.



From November to January a community engagement exercise was run on the updated design for the East Airdrie Link Road. Corporate communications supported this through a news release, GovDelivery email, web information and social media messaging throughout the exercise.

The council received 77 responses to the engagement exercise, and feedback is being used to help refine the detailed route of the road ahead of the planning application being submitted.



Cumbernauld Town Centre

We developed and produced an exhibition in Cumbernauld Library to highlight ideas for the town centre as part of its investment and regeneration programme. As well as a brief history of Cumbernauld, the exhibition showed concept designs to give residents and businesses an opportunity to highlight their needs and demands for the future use of the town centre. We promoted the exhibition which was held over six weeks on social media, traditional media and included information on a dedicated **webpage**. **Council officers were on hand to discuss the concepts with visitors, resulting in 439 individual engagements with officers. Almost all visitors to the exhibition were supportive of the demolition of The Centre progressing, happy with the concept designs, with residents keen to see Cumbernauld town centre transformed and have the negative image of the town removed. A few areas of concern were highlighted through the engagement, such as parking, accessibility and the famous St Enoch's clock. There were also 263 survey responses and 1,667 hits to the webpage.**

We also 'styled' the fronts of vacant units and the escalator to alert visitors and businesses to the fact that the town centre is changing. The visual panels featured a QR code which took users through the dedicated webpage with the latest updates on what was happening in the town centre.

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Community Hubs

Across North Lanarkshire there are currently five community hub projects in or close to beginning construction. These projects represent an investment of over £160million.

They include Orbiston Community Hub in Bellshill, St Kevin's Community Hub in Bargeddie, Gartcosh Community Hub, the extension to Chryston High School and the St Stephen's Community Hub.

Our media team has worked with the estate development team to publicise these projects throughout the key stages of their development, including the new Chryston Community Hub declared officially open in June 2024. To celebrate the opening we created three videos which were seen by thousands of people.

The £22 million state-of-the-art facility houses Chryston Primary School and the new Community Health Clinic for NHS Lanarkshire, replacing the Muirhead Clinic.



DIGITAL NL

We continue to encourage residents and businesses to access council services online through our ongoing 'It's Quicker to Click' campaign. To migrate online, customers have to sign up to a MyAccount and by the end of March 2025, we have 159,862 people registered, which means that all households in North Lanarkshire should have an account, with 5,125 average weekly users. This is a 17% rise on the figure for March 2024 and represents 57% of the adult population aged 16 and above in North Lanarkshire.

As more council services are available online, we are highlighting how residents can access the services. A further 16 services came online in the last year, which we promoted to communities.

Analysis of web visit data shows highlights from just some of the online services (using forms) completed from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025, demonstrating increased use.

Promotion of the Driving Digital Locally intergenerational programme is showing how the council is supporting older residents to learn about digital technology. Details of successful projects were shared on our local channels and in relevant media, recognising the achievements of the 115 pupils and 90 residents who took part over eight sessions. Another project offering digital skills to people in Holytown saw 11 residents completing a course solely on the back of promoting locally.

Webpage or form	Page views (of which are unique)
Recycling book in	20181
Request a housing repair	16112
Request a special uplift	9217
Free school meals and clothing grants	7802
Report a household waste issue	6967
Request a new recycling bin	3561
Report anti-social behaviour	2835
Report a roads and pavements problem	2827
Complaint	2413
Fly-tipping report a problem	2324
Report an abandoned vehicle	2264
Request a new bin	1367
Request street cleaning	1340
Report a problem with a tree	1235
Report a problem with streetlighting	1340
Request pest control	1074
Request to join bin pullout service	956

SUSTAINABLE FUTURES

Through the Centre of Excellence for Decarbonising Roads (CEDR), the council carried out the first trials of new materials designed to reduce carbon in the roads industry.

A range of innovative materials were applied during the trials, including a surface rejuvenator which aims to extend the life of the road, products to repair potholes and road marking materials.

Regular inspections of the trial sites are ongoing to monitor the condition and performance of each product over time.

In partnership with the CEDR partners, corporate communications delivered a communications plan to share learning and outcomes from the project with other local authorities, academic institutions, and private companies within the road industry.







Recycling

New shared waste facilities for flats are delivering a significant improvement in recycling levels.

As a result of contamination, the previous bins regularly saw 70% of materials rejected – with the new bins, more than 98% is recycled. To support installation of the new facilities at 80 locations, a comprehensive pack of information was created and provided to tenants to help them use the bins effectively.

A new grant scheme offering small to medium sized businesses help to reduce their environmental impact and improve the sustainability was launched in April 2024. We promoted the Net Zero Business Challenge Fund through local media and our channels aimed at the business sector, and as a result, our enterprise team received 30 applications.



2024 marked the 10th anniversary of Get Walking Lanarkshire, a partnership between North and South Lanarkshire Councils, NHS Lanarkshire and Paths for All which organises 33 free weekly walks.

We promoted a series of four special walks held in May to celebrate the anniversary and followed up with social media posts thanking everyone who took part and using photos from the walks.

In October, we followed up with a news release and four-week social media campaign highlighting different benefits of the health walks, with photos and quotes from participants.

The social media posts were well received, with high engagement rates and the campaign resulted in a number of new walkers joining the health walks programme.

BRIGHTER FUTURES

Sum it Up



We used a multi-channel campaign to promote our adult numeracy programme designed to enhance confidence with numbers and increase employability prospects. This included the creation of 12 videos featuring real participants describing their experiences and achievements which were promoted on Google, Snapchat, YouTube, Spotify and 60 online radio stations. Print materials and outdoor adverts were strategically placed in high-footfall areas such as supermarkets, schools, GP surgeries and individual classes were promoted on the Adult Learning Facebook page.

- Adverts and videos generated over 13.2 million impressions and 95.7k clicks in total
- As a result of campaign activities, the webpage was visited 85K times by 66K users
- The Adult Learning Facebook page grew from 720 to 1,030 followers within two months
- Registrations for some classes increased from zero to full capacity following social media posts

This campaign generated impressive results with over 450 individuals supported to date.

- 360 learners registered for Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) courses

- 283 SQA qualifications achieved, with 52 learners earning multiple qualifications
- 95% of participants reported improved numeracy skill
- 98% expressed high satisfaction with their learning experience
- 77% reported improvements in their personal life and mental/physical health.

In addition, the multi-media team created a website for the west partnership, comprising eight local authorities, to promote numeracy courses across the region. This included designing and creating the website and content, including videos and sound. Called Multiply123, the website saw over 53,000 visits over the year, 38,400 unique users, 247 enquiry forms submitted and 240 people providing feedback that they found out about the campaign through advertising.



The Hive

Only 2.2% of working-age women in North Lanarkshire are self-employed. As a way of addressing inequalities in entrepreneurship, the team was heavily involved in the design and development of The Hive, which launched in February 2024. A visible space to house and support female-founded business start-ups to increase business participation and economic performance.

Offering desks, offices, meeting rooms, treatment rooms, onsite business support and networking opportunities, we are the first local authority in Scotland to offer a dedicated female-led business workspace.

Creating a compelling brand and look for the facility, as well as campaign collateral, we devised a campaign targeting women over 18, to drive them to register with The Hive, included the creation of bespoke, branded signage and fixtures and fittings within the facility itself, printed collateral (flyers, pull-up banners, posters), a webpage, new Facebook page, audio adverts across 60 online radio stations, and videos promoted on Google and YouTube.

The Hive Facebook page following grew from zero to over 1k followers, on-page adverts and FB posts gained a



total of 3.2 million impressions, with 33.3k click-throughs to the Hive webpage. A series of testimonial videos featuring Hive users were viewed 91k times. This activity helped drive 444 online registrations with The Hive, 1,424 hours of workspace bookings over the year and 298 women attending events. Importantly, 31 new female-led businesses have been created thanks to support from The Hive.



Volunteers

Throughout 2023/24 and 24/25 we posted on facebook, X and LinkedIn to highlight volunteering opportunities available to both individual people and to employers. These posts helped grow the number of people involved in volunteering projects in our area with 164 volunteering opportunities created and 62 organisations receiving grants to assist with volunteering, making a difference to communities in North Lanarkshire.



Pathways to Work

To support the recruitment of Modern Apprentices into council roles, 10 positions were promoted through Facebook and LinkedIn in May 2024 using videos and images of past and present apprentices describing their experiences and achievements. The series of posts received a combination of 2.3k reactions, comments or shares and 19k post clicks, which resulted in 170 applications. Prior to our activity, only 22 applications had been received.



Scottish Apprenticeship week was also promoted in March to raise awareness of apprenticeships to young people and their families through a series of posts celebrating our Apprentices, on Facebook and LinkedIn, which resulted in 2.1k reactions, comments or shares and 9k clicks.

The 2024 Student Summer Placement Programme was a resounding success, supporting 128 young people aged 16-18 from local high schools, priority groups, and New College Lanarkshire in paid six-week placements across key sectors including construction, health & social care, early years, sport, and administration. A strong communications strategy, working in partnership with our Early Careers Team, played a central role in achieving this success. A wide range of channels was used, including news releases, engaging student and mentor videos, regular social media posts, internal communications, and direct promotion through schools and colleges. These efforts helped raise awareness, encourage applications, and celebrate achievements, including a high-profile celebration event attended by over 300 people. Key achievements include a 97% completion rate, 43 students offered casual contracts,



and several securing apprenticeships or permanent employment. The programme also provided skills workshops, Green CSCS Cards for construction students, and real-world experience that has equipped participants with transferable skills and boosted their future prospects.

We are already preparing for our 2025 intake with key figures including:

- 1492 applications (250 last year) – a huge boost in applications
- 485 students invited to interview
- Approximately 192 placements
- Increase in Built Environment external placements from 21 in 2024 to 40 this year



NL Employer Charter

We work with the employability services team to promote the NL Employer Charter to businesses across North Lanarkshire to maintain and support a network of good employers who do business responsibly, to a set of prescribed standards.

With the aim of increasing membership, a campaign to promote the charter to all businesses in started in September 2024 through news articles, email marketing and social media posts. A series of adverts and videos were produced, using current charter member testimonials and promoted online on appropriate business-to-business channels: LinkedIn, Google and YouTube, through direct marketing with emails/hard-copy leaflets sent to 11,429 senior decision makers and supporting a presence at local business events.

The adverts generated 7.7 million impressions, resulting in 49k click-throughs to the webpage. The video adverts were fully viewed 53,000 times.

We now have 62 employers who have registered to become accredited charter members.

Working for Families

We worked with the service to devise a look and feel to the Working for Families programme, which with partners, provides tailored support to individual family needs, spurring parents into work as a way of lifting families out of poverty.

The programme's range of interventions helped parents overcome barriers to employment, resulting in increased income and unlocking employment and training opportunities. We produced a new brand, website, video and audio adverts and printed collateral (posters, flyers, pull-up banners and billboard/bus shelter ads) with the aim of encouraging parents to register with the programme.

The campaign activity generated 5M impressions and 69k click-throughs to the new website and the video advert was viewed 33k times. The audio adverts, featuring positive experiences from real service users, were shared across 60 online radio stations. Our Google search optimisation resulted in 11% of those searching for relevant terms clicking through to the WFF website.

As a result of this outstanding activity, 680 parents have now registered with Working for Families with 206 securing employment, 152 gaining work placements and 228 attaining qualifications, demonstrating that this campaign resonated with the right people.



Are you a parent who is feeling:

- Low in confidence?
- Isolated?
- Overwhelmed?

Working for families is here to support you to get things back on track.

Get in touch today for an informal, confidential chat:

Freephone:
0800 073 0226

To find out more:
workingforfamilies.co.uk

working for Families

Scottish Government
Rannachd na h-Alba
gobhlachd

LIVE HERE

Breastfeeding Friendly

We're the first council in Scotland to achieve the Breastfeeding Friendly Scotland Local Authority Award at the gold standard. This was followed by a win at the COSLA awards for the initiative in the Tackling Inequalities and Improving Health and Wellbeing category. We delivered internal communications to promote



our breastfeeding policy by producing a video of an employee who felt she was enormously supported in her return to work and external communications to highlight our work with partners across our local communities to raise awareness of the benefits of breastfeeding support.

Our promotion of a range of initiatives including Breastfeeding Friendly Scotland week local events and highlighting work in schools and nurseries to deliver breastfeeding education has helped to change the culture of breastfeeding and support healthier futures for all. One recent post on Facebook received 498 engagements, 253 comments and 104 shares. Historically, North Lanarkshire has had one of the lowest breastfeeding rates in Scotland but this activity has helped change behaviour with at present 50% of babies are breastfed at the 10-14 day old review, with the breastfeeding rate at 6-8 weeks thereafter increasing from 23.1% to 30.4% over the period of The Plan for North Lanarkshire.

Tackling Poverty

Poverty and in particular, child poverty, continues to have a detrimental effect on families. We provided ongoing communications support throughout the year across a range of PR, digital, social media, website and campaign activities, including articles in the Tenants' News to the integrated multi-service teams that can assist.



We supported Challenge Poverty Week (7 to 13 October 2024) to help raise awareness of support and solutions to poverty available. Throughout the week, we shared information aligned with the daily themes to promote the wide range of advice and support available for families facing income or money challenges. This included promotion of local community events, and the launch of a Pension Credit campaign aimed at encouraging applications and entitlement to the Winter Fuel Payment.

- Challenge Poverty Week results: received 116,747 (6688 local channels) impressions, 361 reactions (10 local), 185 shares (13 local), 240 link clicks (19 local) and 993 engagements (53 local). A series of 13 animations created (also produced in BSL) and launched to support the campaign.
- During 24/25, debt advice services provided by our Tackling Poverty team assisted 1,992 individuals,

addressing over £6.4 million of debt, an annual increase of 14%

- Requests for benefit checks rose by over 41% and welfare rights referrals increased by 25%, generating nearly £48 million in additional benefit income for North Lanarkshire residents.
- Housing Income Maximisers (trained to support tenants at every stage of their tenancy) generated a total income of £20,068,915.83 for tenants during 2024/25.

The Rapid Re-Housing Transition Plan (RRTP) helps to address homelessness and we signpost people to support and help such as the Household Support Fund, which has assisted 140 young, single individuals facing financial hardships with essentials like rent, energy, and food costs, preventing further cases of homelessness.

The team works closely with the community partnership team to engage with communities by highlighting the successful delivery of local development plan projects using video to showcase community use of new facilities. As a way of influencing participation, particularly around the community asset transfers programme, we promoted local achievements to demonstrate successful community ownership of assets. A video made with grassroots sports club, Fir Park Corner was well received online, after it was granted ownership of Overtown Sports Pitch and Pavilion and was viewed 14,626 times and received 252 comments and reactions. The agreement has enabled the football club to establish the pitch and pavilion as a central hub for their teams, which currently include an amateur team, an over-35s team, and four children's teams.



INVEST IN NORTH LANARKSHIRE

To promote North Lanarkshire as an attractive base for business to set-up, relocate or expand, a series of eight videos featuring local companies who have either located to or expanded in the region were produced and shared using online channels LinkedIn and YouTube - targeting senior decision makers across the UK. News copy was promoted when new businesses located to the area, to highlight their experiences and the benefits to other potential organisations. There was also a feature in Commercial Property Magazine to further raise the profile of North Lanarkshire as THE place for business.



The videos have achieved 4.4 million impressions and 28k clicks-throughs to the Invest website. This represents an average click-through rate of 0.63%, which is higher than the industry average of 0.43%. This generated 54 enquiries from interested businesses through the website during the campaign period.

ONE SERVICE

As part of the One Service programme of work, The Plan for North Lanarkshire roadshow was planned, developed and delivered to coincide with the new five-year Programme of Work.

We organised a series of engagement events from April to September 2024 for staff, stakeholders and elected members as a platform to outline The Plan for North Lanarkshire and the associated Programme of Work. Entirely organised by a core team, a total of 75 events took place across 42 different venues to provide a wide geographical spread and opportunity for staff to attend. In addition, dedicated sessions were arranged for community boards and community groups, elected members and local industry through a business breakfast, which generated a number of leads for the enterprise team.

Designed in two parts: a dynamic multi-media presentation on The Plan for North Lanarkshire and the Programme of Work by a chief officer, and an engagement session, where staff could feedback and input their thoughts.

The team's promotional work generated 3314 bookings made on an online booking system, resulting in 2630 attendees, representing an attendance rate of 79.3%, higher than average for conference attendance figures.

This represents almost one in five members of staff attended a session. Overall, more than two thirds of staff thought that North Lanarkshire as a region was getting better and 79.9% of respondents said that they thought the Programme of Work was getting it right in terms of achieving the right outcomes.

Almost all attendees thought the sessions were valuable with many saying the presentation was informative, dynamic and visually stimulating. Having the opportunity to ask questions and find out more information about the programme of work was productive and helped them have a better understanding of the 'bigger picture' on what the council was aiming to deliver with its partners.

There is an appetite for more engagement sessions with an update on progress, possibly at a more local level within services and the service will explore this further.

We will continue to find new ways to engage with staff and strengthen the 'one service' ethos. We continue to work on an ongoing brand development programme to implement visual consistency across the physical estate and digital materials. A number of leisure centres, community hubs, facilities and workspaces have had design elements installed from signage, installations, wayfinding and visual branding over the last year.



LIVE HERE

It's Your Place

Launched in December 2023, this ongoing campaign aims to highlight issues such as littering, fly tipping, graffiti and dog fouling which negatively impact on our communities.



We developed a campaign image to link the different issues under one brand that aims to promote community engagement - not dropping litter or allowing dogs to foul the streets - as well as proactively improving communities by carrying out litter picks or reporting fly tipping. We have also issued messaging advising the public to be careful using 'man with a van services' advertised on social media. Investigations by SEPA show that corrupt operators may dispose of the waste they collect through fly-tipping.

A community recognition badge is used to thank groups who have contributed to improving their local area, and we plan to include a new category within the annual Provost's Awards.

As part of the campaign, we support Keep Scotland Beautiful's annual Spring Clean campaign. In 2024, 235 litter picks were carried out in North Lanarkshire, with 3,598 people taking part. Hilltop Primary School in Airdrie also won the top prize in the Litter League competition among schools in Scotland.

In May, the campaign also highlighted the community groups which received grants from our Recover NL initiative to carry out environmental improvements in their local area.

We created dog fouling signs which the service erected in hot spot areas to deter poor dog owner behaviour, with a complementary social media campaign.



Enforcement figures for financial year 2024/25

Financial year 2024/25	Number of FPNs Issued
Litter	581
Fly Tipping	83

Dog Work	2024/25
Dog Fouling FPNs	0
Dog Fouling Patrols	296
Dog Fouling signs erected	1,051
Stray Dogs Uplifted	71
Dog Bag Deliveries	546 (over a million bags distributed free to residents)

- The Transport (Scotland) Act 2019 makes it illegal to park on the pavement in Scotland, as well as double parking and at dropped kerbs designed to allow pedestrians to cross the road safely. The council started to enforce this legislation in March 2025 but the team promoted the new law from the start of the year to raise awareness and pre-empt a change in driver behaviour by creating warning notices for parking attendants to place on vehicles parked illegally.
- We assisted Food Standards Scotland to widely distribute information about potentially contaminated vodka containing the chemical isopropyl, which can be harmful if consumed, that was circulating in a North Lanarkshire town. This issue then escalated as it was identified in other UK cities and became a criminal investigation relating to potentially serious organised crime. The local retailer's licence was revoked as a result.

Suicide Prevention

It is widely reported that poor mental health across the UK is becoming a bigger issue meaning that preventative work and education around the issues have never been more critical.

In North Lanarkshire, our strategy focuses on reducing stigma, reaching people in their everyday environments, and ensuring consistent, compassionate messaging that encourages people to talk, seek help, and support others. Over the last year we have continued to target 16 to 24 year olds and 35-55 year olds with two specially designed creatives. This has included delivering nearly 3 million impressions and achieving over 26,000 click throughs to the webpage from digital adverts on Google, Snapchat, Instagram, Facebook and Tiktok. Our engagement rate has been at least four times higher than the industry average and the suicide prevention films have been watched over 66,000 times this year alone. The youth film focuses on the message that hiding your feelings can make things worse.

The second film appealing to a wider and older audience, urges people never to assume that someone is okay and to persist in checking on and talking to them. These figures show that our films have successfully engaged with audiences and we are exploring concepts for developing an additional creative for the youth audience as well as a new film for the 65+ audience.

Meanwhile we have continued to develop FeelWellNL, an innovative, holistic interactive chat service that provides information and ideas for promoting mental wellbeing while quickly identifying and signposting vulnerable people to the support they need. Initially, access to the service was via discreet signage installed in 'locations of concern'. However, recognising the increasing number of suicides taking place within the home, we are now more focused on digital delivery.

We have trialled geo targeting and targeting by age and the results have been promising. Throughout the year there have been 1,385 engaged users. Users who indicated that they were 'feeling bad' and 'didn't see their mood improving', were asked if they had experienced thoughts of suicide within the preceding few days. 61 users shared that they had felt suicidal. The response these people received was developed in consultation with Samaritans and Breathing Space and urged them to seek help immediately as well as providing them with a range of appropriate contacts.

This message may well have saved up to 61 lives.



Domestic abuse support

The council has a commitment to ending violence against women in all its forms. Data was informing us that domestic abuse is under-reported amongst women over 50. A campaign specifically targeting this demographic to promote support services to them ran on Meta (Facebook & Instagram) in October 2024. This channel was selected because 72% of the target audience use this channel. Our adverts reached 53,000 women aged 50 to 90 in North Lanarkshire, gaining 441k impressions and 667 link clicks to the adult protection webpage where we share all the details of support services available to them.

Aura, one of the support services we promoted, reported an uptick of women contacting them during the campaign period, with 50 individuals getting in touch - an increase from previous months.



Scottish Housing Day

We supported Scottish Housing Day and its theme, Homes for Life by promoting how adaptations, technology and resources can help tenants remain in their home as they get older.

As part of the campaign, a video was created and showcased on Facebook, featuring the tenants living in one of our retirement housing complexes, talking about the benefits of living independently but with enhanced housing support. The video gained 325 likes, 80 comments and 37k views with a CTR of 96 and 41 shares. A second video highlighted the benefits of assistive technology in living independently at home which also performed well. Email communications to 11,482 housing subscribers secured a 16% open rate and 2% CTR. Our final post promoted the Making Life Easier project, had 1894 impressions which led to increased interest and demand for the project.

Period products

In support of the Scottish Government's initiative enshrined in law, to provide free, easily accessible period products to anyone who needs them, we continue to promote free period products and where to get them, across our communities. A campaign, which ran from October 24 until March 25, involved the promotion of a suite of adverts (including an animation) across a range of channels including printed collateral such as posters, flyers and pull-up banners, plasma screens in leisure centres, cultural venues, schools and community centres and online on Snapchat, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and Google - which amassed a total of 4.6 million impressions and 20k clicks. The webpage has been visited 20k times during the campaign and the animation has been viewed 105k times. News releases, members briefings and social media posts are all also ongoing. We also promoted 'Period dignity week' in February 25, including a roadshow, visiting multiple community venues to raise awareness of the service.

When polled (2025) 91% of women said they were aware of the service and 78% said they knew where to collect products with 82% saying they'd seen the service advertised, which is testament to the power of the campaign's reach.



LEARN HERE

Our Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) campaign creative once again supported the campaign for early learning placement applications between December 24 and February 25. This year we generated 2,937 applications which is in keeping with the birthrate for children who will turn three years of age for the 25-26 session. Using advertising via Google ads and social media channels for five weeks, supported by organic promotion through our nlpeople channels, our early learning applications page on the website was accessed on around 35,000 occasions.

A consultation took place in early 2025 to determine views on school holiday arrangements.

We used several communication methods including GroupCall messages to all parents, carers and staff, posts on social media platforms, emails to the 28,420 subscribers of school topics, website and reminders in the education and families' weekly bulletin.

A total of 22,840 responses were received during the consultation, representing a 250% increase from the previous consultation. Around 32.6% of eligible parents/carers and 78.3% of eligible school-based staff took part. Most responses came from parents and carers (71%), followed by teachers (13%). Overall, 66% of respondents preferred Option A, which is broadly in line with the current arrangements.

We also supported a range of projects and awareness days with schools and early years facilities including remembering Holocaust Memorial Day on the 80th anniversary of Auschwitz-Birkenau's liberation and 30 years since the Bosnian genocide at St Andrew's High School, celebrating the reopening of Stepps Library with pupils from Stepps Primary Schools and promoting diversity and inclusion for Pride Month with Kilsyth Academy pupils.



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WORK HERE

Due to the significant 86% decline in customer demand and changing customer preferences when it comes to financial transactions for council services, we worked with colleagues in housing to devise a survey to ascertain views on proposals to change the current first stop shop arrangements and whether to integrate face-to-face customer enquiry services with local housing offices. The decision to approve the new operating model was made that will integrate the First Stop Shop services into existing housing offices and adopt a cashless transaction approach across all remaining offices. Although this will not take place until June 2025, posters and leaflets for existing first stop shops have been produced and announcements on local MyTown channels published to ensure awareness of the changes from March 2025.

As well as the promoting employability initiatives through Brighter Futures, the team also contributed to a range of measures to help secure bronze accreditation in the Equally Safe at Work award for our work to advance gender equality, prevent violence against women and for the steps taken to create a more inclusive workplace culture.

As part of this, the team arranged a week-long promotion of sexual harassment in July which coincided with the introduction of the new sexual harassment policy, and included a statement of commitment from the chief executive, highlighted training available and information on how to report incidents. In addition, engagement sessions took place with staff and elected members and an eye-catching promotional campaign including posters, leaflets and other internal communications platforms extended through a programme of internal communications.

A major new partnership between the council and global infrastructure solutions company HOCHTIEF, was announced in September, with the aim of delivering improvements, maintenance work and investment across the roads, footpath and lighting networks and related infrastructure.

As one of the major enterprise contracts for the council, Corporate Communications engaged early with the new contractor and with the previous contractor to ensure an effective handover and to promote awareness internally to staff.



INVEST HERE

Together with the work to drive interest in investing in North Lanarkshire through the Invest in North Lanarkshire campaign and website, we promote major investment to the region, with HSBC Bank and Doble Engineering recent additions to the area. Welsh engineering company, Envico, was another company that we promoted to business media, as it expanded its UK operations and creating 20 new jobs.

At the start of the year, there was significant media coverage on the back of a release we issued that showed North Lanarkshire entered 2025 on a strong footing following a year of positive business performance in the local economy. There was a £2.21 billion increase in turnover by North Lanarkshire businesses in the year to 31 March 2024 with the number of registered businesses increasing by 60 in 2023/24 to 8,385. The number of people employed by businesses in the area also rose to 97,960. We maximised figures published by the Scottish Government's annual Businesses In Scotland report, to demonstrate that total turnover of local businesses reached £17.283 billion in 2024, up 14.7% on the year before.

We work closely with Business Gateway Lanarkshire, which is now in-house, to promote support services to local businesses across the region. This includes promoting networking events to success stories.



VISIT HERE

The North Lanarkshire Stories Trail funded by UKSPF, is a series of 12 original short stories, written by Scottish storyteller Shona Cowie and illustrated by artist Johnathan Chamberlain. Ten of these stories feature on installations designed and built for the project to showcase the tales in in the 10 locations that inspired the stories. Made from corten steel, each installation feature a cut out of a local type of flora and a rubbing tile of an animal, both referenced in the story. A QR code takes the user to the full story for that location on the website and to an AI service offering the opportunity to ask questions of the main character. This allows us to evaluate interactions.

Additional physical outputs include: 12 audio recordings of Shona Cowie reading each story; a webpage for each story on the Visit Lanarkshire website; 500 printed copies of a book featuring all 12 stories; a display located at North Lanarkshire Heritage Centre and an additional story panel located outside the heritage centre displaying the story related to Ravenscraig Steelworks.

The trail was launched in October and has been actively promoted since January with online digital, radio and outdoor adverts as well as 100,000 flyers distributed throughout Central Scotland. In the six months since launch there were around 170,000 views of launch teaser videos; nearly 20,000 visits to www.visitlanarkshire.com/stories; around 1.5m views of our online digital adverts with a consistently higher than industry average click through rate. Meanwhile there were 854 engagements via the QR codes at the signage locations. As the weather improves, we can already see that this number is increasing rapidly and is likely to continue doing so over the coming months.

Following a slow start, google figures show that the number of visitors to the Visit Lanarkshire website is steadily increasing. The number of active users for the year has increased by nearly 100,000, with a rising average dwell time and nearly 230,000 page views. Shoulder season campaign advertising in Autumn and Spring has delivered consistently high engagement rates, ranging from two to six times the industry average. 100,000 promotional flyers were distributed throughout Central Scotland and Greater Glasgow to raise awareness of activities and days-out in Lanarkshire. Organic web visits are up by 37% which suggest that the on and/or offline profile of Lanarkshire has been further raised.



Arts, Culture, Sport and Leisure

A large amount of work is dedicated to driving memberships and usage of leisure facilities or ticket sales for performances, classes and workshops across the entire Active and Creative Communities service.

A dedicated campaign to raise awareness of the annual pantomime and its return to a new venue at Ravenscraig Regional Sports Centre was hugely successful, which positioned the new location for the panto as a new and exciting experience for audiences.

The campaigns team worked closely with the venue team, Spillers Pantomimes and cast to create video and photography content for use throughout the promotional campaign. Photography of the cast was used in promotional campaign graphics, while short video content was created for social media channels using a bright, exciting and humorous creative to reflect the panto production and introduce audiences to the characters.

The three main campaign videos, across all platforms, were viewed 64,806 times, with over 600 comments, shares and reactions and the biggest result was ticket sales, which increased by 34% compared to 2024 with 20,632 sold.

In April 2024, Airdrie Town Hall became the sole council entertainment and events venue, hosting our popular what's on entertainment programme, which previously ran chiefly at Motherwell Concert Hall & Theatre). We launched the first production, the annual Easter pantomime, Rumpelstiltskin, working with local panto actor Iain 'Sheepie' Smith in a video. Promotional artwork focused on ease of access and transport to the venue, to encourage previous audiences of Motherwell to return to the events programme.

From April 2024 to March 2025, there were 49 what's on entertainment shows, with a total of 23,248 tickets sold.

The campaigns team worked closely with venue staff as well as third party promotor to create bespoke promotional campaigns for each show, targeting previous audiences as well as the wider North Lanarkshire Community and beyond. Promotional activities include digital communications such as paid and organic social media, email and listings website; press, PR, print and outdoor.





The sports camps offered by the Active NL team continue to go from strength to strength, with the most recent camps, delivered over Easter school holidays, seeing an increase of **741** attendees compared to 2024 Easter camps (14% increase year on year), reaching and engaging more young people.

The promotional campaign to support this activity ran throughout March 2025 and targeted previous participants of sports camps, as well as the wider school aged community. Campaign graphics were developed to be used across all communication platforms to create a consistent look and feel for the promotional activity, supplemented by video and photography featuring real children and activities undertaken at camps to give an insight into what to expect.

Revenue for Easter camps was also up 37% from 2024.

The annual destination promotional campaigns for Summerlee Museum of Scottish Industrial Life saw creative return to a focus on previously used photography to create familiarity with the audience, as well as linking with Lanarkshire's industrial past.

Active NL memberships are also thriving with several campaigns set up throughout the year to boost

different types of membership. These included outdoor, print, PR and digital activity, with a strong creative focused on the positive impact of physical exercise. Gym memberships overall have grown by 16.5%, from **30,048** in 2024 to **35,021** in 2025.

Supporting campaigns also contributed to specific gym membership types including Active 60 in August 2024, with weekly targets set and exceeded. Through customer testimonials, the team created video and photography content to push a digital campaign on social media and to previous members, which was supported by print and PR. Memberships in this area grew from 8278 to 9506.

In addition, a campaign focused on children's memberships also ran in August to coincide with schools returning and families getting back into a routine after Summer holidays. This campaign used bold new campaign graphics featuring real children with a focus on the Ultimate Sports membership with membership rising from 399 in 2024 to 574 in 2025, while single sports memberships for this audience also increased (1405 to 1477).

The team also ran campaigns for golf season passes in April and September, creating video and photography to promote the 174 in season pass

and the winter pass. Memberships reached a record 1001 (up from 894 the previous year).

Category	Subtype	Mar-24	Mar-25
Gym Membership	Active 60	8278	9506
	Active Health	183	192
	Active Teen	2239	3122
	Adult	4458	5336
	Corporate	2290	2554
	Junior Individual	857	987
	Junior Link	2448	2991
	NHS Staff	1129	1263
	NLC Staff	4604	5441
	Passport to Leisure	1275	1252
Learn to Swim	Single Venue	1171	1284
	Student	1108	1085
	Talented Sports Person	8	8
	Gym Membership Total	30048	35021
	Adult Swim Lessons	57	60
	Early Years Swim Lesson	476	541
	Junior Swim Lessons	4280	4237
	Swim Club	287	279
	Learn to Swim Total	5100	5117
	Single Sport	1405	1477
Sports Development	Ultimate Sports	399	574
	Sports Development Total	1804	2051
Golf	Golf Season Ticket	894	1001
Golf Total		894	1001
Grand Total		37846	43190

Internal Communications

With around 14,500 members of staff, it is important that a more robust way of communicating information at either low or urgent level is devised. An ongoing issue is that only half of staff have a work email address and the team is currently working on an improved process to address this. The roadshow was undoubtedly the biggest commitment to staff communications as a way of conveying more details about the council’s vision and the current programme of work. Feedback from these sessions will help the team explore further opportunities for staff engagement.

- We created 12 newsletters on behalf of the chief executive, with an average of 2,862 views per issue.
- We issued 159 announcements to staff to alert them to news, events, surveys or policy changes
- We promoted a range of initiatives including Cyber Awareness Week, Mental Health Awareness Week, Sexual Harassment Week, Learning and Work Week and serious and organised crime/counter terrorism information.

Digital First

We continue to maximise digital opportunities to share information with residents, businesses and partners. Our digital channels and platforms are key to effective public engagement and thinking ‘digital first’ is crucial for communications.

Website

Our website, northlanarkshire.gov.uk, is firmly established as the key platform for delivering services to our residents – more than 30 online forms linked to back-office systems are now in operation. Total form submissions for 2024 exceeded 50k, up from 41k in 2023, representing a 21% increase.

There continues to be year-on-year growth in general website traffic, with more than 13 million page views (2024-25) compared to 10.5 million over the previous period (2023-24), a 26% increase.

Dates	Page views
April 24 – March 25	13,222,404
April 23 – March 24	10,513,371

The recent addition of a chatbot on every page has made it easier for users to find information and is our first use of AI within online customer services.

In the first six months of operation, there have been over 17,000 chat bot engagements, resolving around 66% of enquiries. Over 7,000 calls are abandoned but in the main, that is due to people dropping off the discussion before formally terminating it. The digital team is constantly looking to improve the service.

The website also continues to provide the basis for many communications campaigns, notably landing pages for Sum It Up and Period Dignity where social media also played a key role in driving traffic.

Social Media








The digital team worked with colleagues to post compelling content on our corporate social media channels, which helped to increase our online presence as the year progressed. With the exception of X, which had a relatively small increase, all our corporate channels saw a healthy increase in follower numbers, most notably on TikTok, with a 419% increase. 2024 was the breakthrough year for the platform with a focus on tailored content, in particular fun videos made for mass participation events like the Broadwood Fan Zone and fireworks at Strathclyde Country Park. Each event resulted in significant step changes in follower numbers.

We also experimented successfully with live video broadcasts on multiple platforms at the fireworks event.

Our diversified social media content strategy, reflected in past years on new platforms like Instagram and NextDoor, and now on TikTok, was further complemented by the launch of a WhatsApp Channel to leverage the huge audience potential of that platform.

We continue to develop the My Town community social media channels, which are growing in strength as we use them to engage with local businesses and communities specific to the nine town areas in North



Corporate Social Media Channel Followers

	31-Mar-25	31-Mar-24	Total change (24-235)	% change (24-25)
	71715	67655	4060	+6.00%
	51933	51334	599	+1.17%
	5033	4378	655	+14.96%
	14612	12819	1793	+13.99%
	2764	533	2231	+418.57%
	42502	37034	5468	+14.76%
	1475	1370	105	+7.66%





My Town Social Media Channels Followers

	Channel	31-Mar-25	31-Mar-24	Total change (24-25)	% change (24-25)
	My Airdrie	4893	4514	379	+8.40%
	My Bellshill	4679	4570	109	+2.39%
	My Coatbridge	5932	5063	869	+17.16%
	My Cumbernauld	2624	2131	493	+23.13%
	My Kilsyth	2598	2574	24	+0.93%
	My Motherwell	5626	4857	769	+15.83%
	My Northern Corridor	566	425	141	+33.18%
	My Shotts	3180	3016	164	+5.44%
	My Wishaw	4723	4392	331	+7.54%
	My Airdrie	803	731	72	+9.85%
	My Bellshill	614	576	38	+6.60%
	My Coatbridge	818	743	75	+10.09%
	My Cumbernauld	425	355	70	+19.72%
	My Kilsyth	398	374	24	+6.42%
	My Motherwell	883	816	67	+8.21%
	My Northern Corridor	118	96	22	+22.92%
	My Shotts	689	682	7	+1.03%
	My Wishaw	629	577	52	+9.01%

Direct Messaging



The digital team continues to respond to direct messages and enquiries on social media, providing a fast-response service, alleviating pressure from calls to the Customer Service Hub and other services, enabling a more joined-up and improved service when interacting with customers. Perhaps reflecting the increased use of online forms and the success of the chatbot, there has been an 18.5% decline in private messages via Facebook and Twitter throughout the business year, from 3,461 to 2,819.

Data Driven

The data collected and analysed during this period has been instrumental in identifying gaps in our social media usage, as well as providing evidence to support our online marketing campaigns and inform our future strategies.

Email Communications

GovDelivery remains the most engaging digital platform with a far higher bulletin open rate (37%) than nlpeople Facebook's post engagement rate (Likes, Comments and Shares) of just 0.61%.

	April 24 – March 25	April 23 – March 24
	3839	2764
	647	697

Date	Number of bulletins	Delivered to	Open rate	Click rate
April 23 – March 24	424	3,322,307	37%	2%
April 24 – March 25	366	3,172,640	38%	2%

Brand and Creative

It's been a busy year for the Brand and Creative team, producing striking and compelling materials and content for campaigns, services and external clients. As a branding programme continues, the team has created a range of templates for staff to use ranging from powerpoints, headed paper, digital signatures and policy documents. A full brand guidance document is underway.

Any products on PDF format legally requires to be accessible which increases the workload on each project. A number of projects have required to be translated, in either other languages or in braille.

The team undertook on Premiere and Aftereffects to enhance digital and animation training skills to produce materials such as short animations, gifs and visual effects.

Over the year, the team worked on 674 individual projects which created 981 pieces of graphic work, as well as 25 external projects.

Highlights internally include all interior materials and promotional campaign assets for The Hive, signage for the new community hubs, the interior design refurbishment of Broadwood Stadium, a programme of refurbished signage for the civic centre campus and supporting design work for events and campaigns.

The creative for the North Lanarkshire Stories Heritage Trail was innovative and unique and the team drew on their historical knowledge of the region to show their creative flair. The resulting installations and books are quite striking, and coupled with the interactive element to the stories, gives rise to a fully engaging attraction for visitors and residents.

A growing sector over the last year has been in producing visual materials for external public sector organisations such as Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA), Voluntary Action North Lanarkshire, NHS Lanarkshire, Centre of Excellence for Decarbonisation and the Scottish Serious Organised Crime Unit. The team has created a suite of materials and plans for SEPA and a range of brand designs for other agencies.

The multi-media production team worked on a total of 54 large media projects, including animations, videos, audio recordings and website projects. The team also worked on 73 smaller multi-media projects.

The output of these media projects included a total of 67 animations, 305 videos, 6 presentations and 33 audio recording sessions. We worked with external clients including NHS Lanarkshire, National Parent Forum of Scotland, City of Glasgow Council, North Lanarkshire Alcohol and Drug Partnership, SEPA and the Scottish Government. Notably we made a series of 16 videos for The Hive women's business incubator which were central to the campaign's success, as well as 20 videos for Challenge Poverty Week, which undoubtedly resonated with residents and drove calls to the tackling poverty team. We also created

videos for the Lanarkshire Business Awards and an interactive presentation for the awards night. The team produced a heart-warming animation for Earth Hour, using the words of a primary school pupil, which had around 15,000 views on the night.

The impressive video and animation for The Plan for North Lanarkshire roadshow was widely commented on by staff, who described it as inspirational and dynamic.

The team also developed and created a website for the eight local authorities in the Glasgow City Region for its Multiply123 campaign, producing video and photography content that complemented the wider advertising campaign. The website had 35,933 users and 53,597 page views across the year to March 2025. Almost 20,000 people in the region participated in a course with 2282 achieving a qualification.



Events

As well as the roadshow, which was one of the largest series of events undertaken, we arranged and managed a number of large-scale and smaller events over the year, often with the support of other services. Some key highlights are:

Capitalising on the success of the national football team getting to the event stage of the 2024 UEFA European Championships, the council hosted two themed fanzone events at Broadwood Stadium in June, believed to be the largest in Scotland. Operational support for both events was provided in terms of compliance with licensing and health and safety, technical assistance, outdoor furniture, performance artists, and signage was installed to ensure the events were safe, appealing and enjoyable.



Social media was used extensively to promote both events, in the lead up and on the day which attracted 1,058,311K people views. Reaching over 24,289K engagements including reactions, comments and shares (includes 838 saves).

Both events sold out in a matter of hours with around 5,000 attending. A family area was created, the big screen for the match, as well as entertainment, stilt walkers, fun activities for the younger age groups and crucially, a street food market and bar in association with THE BIG FEED Street Food Social. Tiered ticket sales were arranged for zone areas, picnic benches with capacity for 600 people and 320 in the barrel sections with 4080 general admission tickets sold. :2.

Feedback on our social channels was extremely positive and provided the local community with an affordable and fun event that supported a global celebration of football and delivered a high-quality event with community value.

The council hosted a special celebration to mark the historic occasion of The Royal Regiment of Scotland (SCOTS) being granted the Freedom of North Lanarkshire in July.

The organised parade recognised the Regiment's dedicated service to the country and local area and featured around 120 SCOTS soldiers, accompanied by their equine mascot, Corporal Cruachan IV who led the military pipe band parade from Dalziel High School to Strathclyde Country Park. A short ceremony took place on the lochside to celebrate this honour.

Social media was used extensively to promote this well-attended parade which attracted 275,385K people views.



people views. The event received over 3,090K engagements including reactions, comments and shares.

Our annual fireworks display at Strathclyde Country Park, which attracted the largest crowd ever, of approximately 50,000 visitors. As well as arranging event logistics, we promoted behind the scenes preparations, information on a web page, posters and banners were on site, a large screen was on site on the night of the display, information in all council locations and social media posts in the run up to the event and on the day. On 5 November we posted live streamed coverage of the fireworks display at Strathclyde Country Park.

The annual Provost's Awards took place in September 2024 and involved arranging the practical logistics

of the event to procuring a celebrity host who also provided entertainment. Elected members and members of community boards nominated individuals and groups from their communities who deserved recognition for their outstanding contributions to supporting people and communities with 37 award winners selected across the nine community board areas.

In the lead up to the event and just before the display burst into production, we received 727,836K people views with maximum 111,517 people views when the 'live stream' started. The event received over 10,135K engagements including reactions, comments and shares.

We arranged a free Christmas partnership event on behalf of Coatbridge Town Board in December which included a live stage hosted by Heart radio and a mix of entertainment from local groups, dance schools and choir, mascots and fun filled stage games with prizes. Following promotion on the local MyCoatbridge channel and posters and flyers around the town centre, around 200 people attended on the day.

The event manager continues to provide specialist advice to and chairs the multi-agency safety advisory group (SAG) for the North Lanarkshire area, providing guidance and assistance to allow public events to be successfully run safely and in compliance with relevant legislation. The council's Safety Advisory Group (SAG) received 27 direct enquiries from both council and external event organisers throughout the year with 19 required to go through the SAG process.



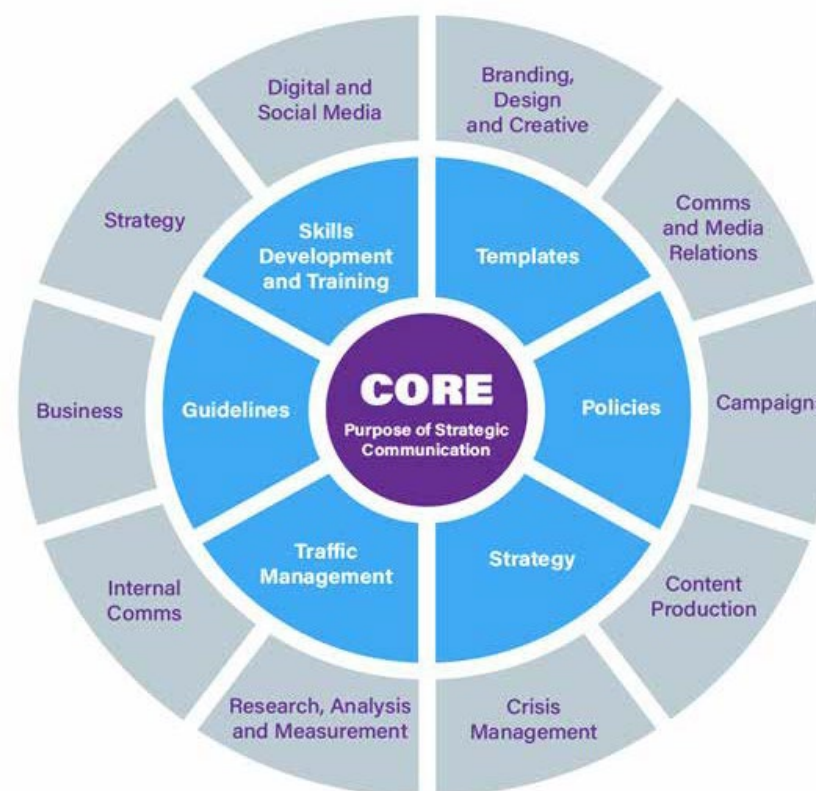
How we work

We utilise the full range of communication disciplines: campaigns and marketing; strategic consultancy; digital, brand and creative support; PR and media relations; internal communications; and major events.

How and why we communicate information is governed by our communications operating model. The speed of changes in digital technology means our operating model and team need to be agile, multi-skilled, engaged and crucially, digitally-skilled. Through our communications platforms and the complementary services within Strategy and Engagement, we offer residents, communities, partners, businesses and the media more choice in how and when they engage with council services.

These processes keep people informed, drive action, generates behavioural change and participation and can contribute to enhancing the lives of people in North Lanarkshire. Improving that process will always be central to our activity and looking forward, digital processes, technology and platforms will constantly be reviewed and updated.

We aim to provide a professional standard of practice to support the council and the operating model comprises three core areas: core competencies and training, standards and systems; governed by an assurance framework. By identifying and improving skills, creating guidance and templates to ensure consistency and standards and a range of support tools, our communications and service will be more organised with systems in place to support staff in their professional development as well as to accomplish their work.



We use the **OASIS** planning tool to ensure our work has a defined outcome that can be evaluated:

Objective: our campaigns will have a clear intended outcome.

Audience: we will define the audiences for each campaign to ensure we reach the relevant people.

Strategy: before we do any creative work we will define the strategy for each campaign which will guide us throughout the life of the campaign.

Implementation: our execution will be creative, bold and provocative. It will maximise the opportunity to change behaviour and achieve the outcome.

Scoring: we will set out how we will evaluate our work for each campaign in advance, the most significant measures will be those that demonstrate the outcome as opposed to reach or awareness-raising.

We have highly-skilled people. Communication techniques in a digital world evolve rapidly, so we will ensure our skills are kept up to date, utilising the latest technology and sharing knowledge.

The role of communications is important to the operations of the council, with increased accountability on how it supports service delivery.

The emergence and increased use of AI, automation, and changing communication technology and algorithms and an increasingly fragmented social media landscape means that the team must keep on top of industry trends to ensure cut-through in our communications. A focus will remain on good quality content over frequency, ensuring that messaging is targeted and better evaluated through analytics.

Our communications are:

Community-focused: we will foster a sense of community spirit that is supportive. By championing certain types of behaviour or attitudes we can strengthen communities. We will promote community empowerment and participation.

Challenging: our communications can be confrontational and inspiring to generate behavioural change. If we need to be frank with the public on issues, we'll use forthright language to encourage people to address and change their behaviour and challenge those around them.

Informative: our work should direct people to information so they have improved access to services and advice but also demonstrate how services make a positive impact on people and communities. Encouraging take-up of enhanced services through digital offering will be championed as we help people to help themselves, assisting to make our communities more resilient and capable.

Inspiring: enlightening to residents and businesses about what already exists and what we are planning to do in North Lanarkshire. We will reinforce our vision for the future, vitalise our communities with our ideas and work collaboratively.

Creative: we will use the full range of creative skills to ensure our messages are compelling, whether through video, photography, design or in writing.

Responsive: we will be quick to respond in times of an incident or an issue occurring to assist the public, services and partners, as well as being fleet of foot in the digital realm.

Practical: whether responding to an emergency situation or to assist people in acquiring a service, communications needs to provide realistic and reassuring advice using language easily understood by people.

Shaping and embracing AI into our operating model will be crucial, while adapting to the challenges it can bring. Communications should be at the forefront of this type of technology, moving at a faster pace with foundations based on factual insight.

We will be smarter in our audience segmentation and messaging, ensuring information that is relevant is distributed to the right people. AI and improved audience analytics will enhance this.

A focus on local will be maintained. Working closely with colleagues in the other Strategy and

Engagement sections will assist in relationship-building and dissemination of information locally.

The communication tools we use and what we say should be authentic, realistic, inspirational and meaningful. And that means understanding our audiences better and delivering high-quality, relevant content. It should also be more two-way, where we listen to residents and respond with helpful information.

LIVE
LEARN
WORK
INVEST
VISIT

North Lanarkshire Council Report

Policy & Strategy Committee

Does this report require to be approved?

☒ Yes ☐ No

Ref SP/ST

Date

05/06/25

Leadership & Operating Model – phase 2 progress update

From Stephen Penman, Chief Officer, (Strategy and Engagement)

E-mail PenmanSte@northlan.gov.uk **Telephone** 07947 997750

Executive Summary

As outlined in the leadership and operating model report presented to committee on 05 December 2024, the delivery plan within the approved One Service programme of work aims to facilitate the Council's transition over three phases within the next 10-15 years towards a fully integrated town and community hub operating model.

This progress report sets out the developments that have taken place in the last 6 months and presents a positive update in terms of Hub service uptake whilst outlining the next steps, challenges and mitigating actions.

The report highlights that intrinsic to the phased transition are connections and dependencies across the plan for NL programme of work with critical dependencies between hub strategy and development, corporate asset management and approved rationalisation, digital transformation, community wealth building and strategic workforce planning by Council services - together with acknowledging the landscape faced by the community and voluntary sector and the public sector reform that lies ahead.

The report seeks approval on plans and direction set out.

Recommendations

It is recommended that Policy and Strategy Committee:

- (1) Acknowledge the progress made since the last update to Committee on 05 December 2024 where the employment of the officers to coordinate and strengthen hub delivery plans was approved.
- (2) Support the acceleration of plans by helping to build presence and understanding of the hubs and their benefit to the local community and inspire greater involvement from local people and community and voluntary sector organisations in support of the local outcome improvement plans (LOIPs).
- (3) Recognise and help mitigate some of the practical challenges described as we increase our focus on a community led approach to the community hubs.
- (4) Approve the direction set out with a further report on progress to be presented to Committee in December 2025.

The Plan for North Lanarkshire

Priority	All priorities
Ambition statement	All ambition statements
Programme of Work	One Service

1. Background

- 1.1 This report is an update on the Leadership and Operating Model and asset rationalisation delivery plan discussed at Policy and Strategy Committee on 05 December 2024.
- 1.2 Members will recall from the December meeting what phase 2 of the approved three phased Leadership and Operating Model programme sets out to achieve, see **Appendix 1**. Fundamentally, a new and more integrated place-based service delivery model means that we need our assets to work differently across a community, particularly with a declining school age population and rising elderly adult population, whilst meeting the needs of a more distributed workforce working across communities and within people's homes. This means providing the ability for identified teams, supports, activities and services to be consolidated into or delivered from hubs and other assets to have a greater impact on improving equity and health outcomes across North Lanarkshire.
- 1.3 Community hubs, in line with the council's approved strategy, target operating model and programme of work delivery plan, should act as a gateway for support and services and for early intervention, preventative support and targeted activities based on local needs. This to be achieved through greater integrated community and Council-run activity. This was reinforced within the report "Delivering the Programme of Work – key achievements" presentation to Committee on 13 March 2025 on the delivery of whole family support, digital connectivity and supports the approval at the same Committee relative to the First Stop Shop service redesign and alternative delivery of local housing support and surgeries.
- 1.4 Furthermore, the developing hub offerings and modern well-equipped spaces available for community use should support delivery of the local outcome improvement plans (LOIP's) that are facilitated through the community board structure, locality partnership teams and locality planning groups – as well as improved outcomes in line with the plan for NL.
- 1.5 As approved by Committee at the December 2024 meeting the employment of three community hub co-ordinators to progress phase 2 and support the transition over the next 2-years is a step forward to accelerate plans, evidenced in the report below.

2. Report

- 2.1 This report provides an update on the elements of the leadership and operating model delivery plan accelerated following Committee on 5th December 2025 and aims to clearly outline the breadth of transition activity underway, with supporting Appendices.

2.2 The report focuses on two main areas:

1. Progress within phase 2 since December 2024 including:
 - Implementation of the Community Hub Coordinator role
 - Council and strategic partner organisations provide a core offer
 - Community led approaches and increasing third sector presence
 - Business process improvements, hub adaptations and infrastructure enhancements all critical to successful operation of the hubs and advancing our plans
2. Forward plan of next steps and the risks and mitigating action for this phase

Progress within phase 2 since December 2024

Implementation of the Community Hub Coordinator role

- 2.3 Three hub coordinators took up their posts on 20 January 2025. The role whilst being responsible for ensuring smooth day to day operations of the hubs, is working across Council services, partners and communities to shape the delivery of a range of 'needs based' support, information, advice services and activities in the hub. As part of our aim to increase presence of the hubs and build a greater understand of the value they add to the local community the team have hosted c.54 tours with c.230 individuals reflected in the increased uptake to access space for delivery of supports and activity and the forward plans outlined in the following sections of the report. This engagement builds on co-design work previously reported to this Committee in December 2024 to understand local needs through the work on 'Getting it right for everyone' and 'Whole Family Support' as well as individual service knowledge and data insights.
- 2.4 To build solid foundations for developing the approach in each hub, a hub activity analysis was first carried out for each hub to understand the profile of use since opening and how the range of activity fits with local needs and priorities. Members may recall a similar exercise presented to this Committee on 16 March 2023 for all Council assets across Community Boards. The detail of this analysis for each hub is provided in **Appendix 2** and also provides a baseline measure against the approved [hub guiding principles](#) 1, 3 and 6 (see below image 1.0) as we work to meet and address local needs and realise the c.£66.9m investment made that will, of course, take time to evidence through the plan for NL health check indicators.
- 2.5 Overall the analysis recognises the hosting of a range of activity and a growing use of hub spaces. It recognises the demand for outdoor sports facilities and a particular spike in the use of indoor community spaces in the last 12 months and since the last report was presented. Growth and opportunity areas are reflected within the report, and we expect to positively impact the range of activity evidenced in the next annual analysis through Q2 and Q3 2025/26 plans as described in **Appendix 2**. Work is also ongoing with Community Facilities to ensure data and activity is consistently recorded across all hubs, and with the asset and procurement team to reconfigure spaces as required to maximise usage and occupancy of the spaces.

Image 1.0 Hub guiding principles

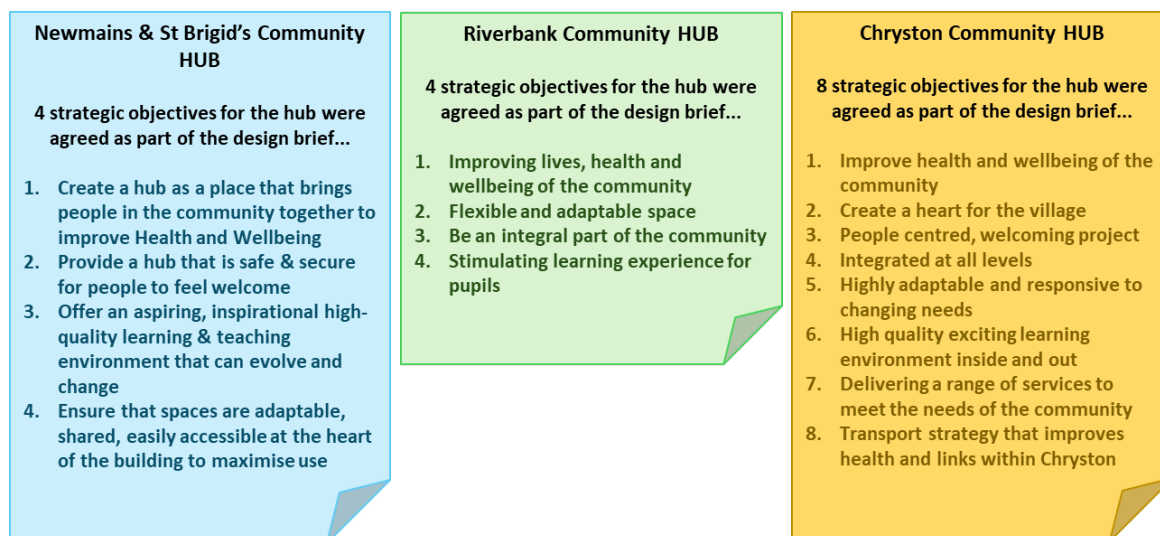


- 2.6 The community hub coordinators are now chairing their relative hub delivery boards, as per the previous approach and terms of reference approved by Committee on 16 March 2023 and as can be seen in image 2.0 below. The hub delivery boards for Riverbank and Chryston were mobilised at the end of March 2025 following the issue of a survey to parents and families of the young people attending the schools and nursery establishments within the hubs as a first step.
- 2.7 Engaging the local parent councils to agree the survey and the engagement of local parents and families was key to build on the original design objectives for each hub, set out in image 2.1 below. These were each approved following hub strategy and development consultation exercises, and our forward plan is to ensure these objectives and all plans for hubs impact positively on the plan for NL health check indicators as illustrated in the example in **Appendix 3** for Newmains & St Brigid's.

Image 2.0 Chryston Hub delivery board March 2025 meeting in the HUB STEM room



Image 2.1 Hub objectives established as part of the design brief consultation



2.8 The already established Newmains & St Brigid's delivery board is shaping the plan for 2025/26 with Q1 25/26 plans illustrated in this report and associated case studies within the **Appendices 5 and 6-9 provided.**

2.9 Concurrently, in support of our transition towards a community led approach, wider stakeholder and community engagement is ongoing as part of the 'Working with Communities' framework. The coordinators attended the recent cycle of Community Boards and are working closely with the community partnership team to identify and engage local community and voluntary sector organisations to build presence of the hubs and look at how the hub as a delivery vehicle can support the local outcome improvement plans. This has resulted in the development of stakeholder maps and c.54 hub visits by individuals including Elected Members and local community organisations to see the hub and its spaces, leading to agreement for services and organisations to operate from the hubs some of the week, as reflected in section 2.3, the hub timetable provided in **Appendix 4** and the following sections of the report.

Council and strategic partner organisations providing a core offer

2.10 Having the capacity through the hub coordinators to directly engage with Council services, partnership organisations, community, voluntary sector organisations and including our commissioned services is driving greater understanding of the hubs and the opportunity to increase reach and offer support in the heart of communities. An update on Council and wider current and planned delivery from hubs is set out from section 2.11 to 2.34 below and illustrated in the timetable presented in **Appendix 4.**

Whole Family Support

2.11 In line with the Resilient People programme of work, accessible and inclusive family support has continued to be delivered by the universal family support service, named Families Here and Now Service (FHANS). Piloted from the Newmains and St Brigid's hub area in April 2024 FHANS have developed their capacity and since January 2025 scaled across North Lanarkshire, now based in every community and delivering from the three Community hubs.

- 2.12 In the first three quarters FHANS have evidenced successful integration into existing GIRFEC support pathways and structures with most referrals being received from education, social work and health. Delivery from community Hubs has developed in line with the new operating model and community need. Although FHANS have been delivering across communities for only 6 months, the result is local, community-based support that reaches out to communities, and delivery of a broad range of practical, emotional and group interventions to whole families at the earliest, preventative time.
- 2.13 To facilitate integrated planning and continually responsive delivery, FHANS are coordinated by a named contact for each area. The highest accessed intervention is 1:1 support. Wider intervention in each community area can differ, for example in Bellshill FHANS were asked to respond to needs of a group of young people within a school by establishing a peer support group that would move into the community to meet greater need, while aligning with the principle of peer mentoring and developing sustainable approaches to support. With Orbiston Community Hub due to open in Q3 2025/26 the service will operate from there.
- 2.14 Each Hub has a weekend family activity-based support and a drop in on a Friday, planned intentionally to offer support ahead of the weekend for families. As drop-ins develop, these will be increasingly integrated, offering access to tackling poverty, employability resources or any other identified support need as described later in this section of the report.
- 2.15 The overall impact of the FHANS service supported by delivery through community hubs and the place-based approach as reported to Education and Families Committee on 20 May 2025 is demonstrating positive impact and evidence against the measures of success outlined in section 3.1 of the report.
- 2.16 North Lanarkshire Carers Together are commissioned to deliver a Family Support Service to parent carers and their child or young person living at home who has a need for additional support. The Neurodevelopmental Family Support Service is tailored to meet the needs of each individual family. The hubs provide an accessible space which enable NL Carers Together to have a base within local communities to meet with families, children and young people when required. Out of 248 families who accessed support over the past year, none escalated to intensive services and across both early help services there have been fabulous examples of integrated, partnership working for families which offers a no wrong door. In addition to this, they provide staff within the Neurodevelopmental Family Support Service with a functional working space to meet the increasing demands of the service. **Appendix 4** illustrates when the hubs are being used to provide this.

Community Learning and Development

- 2.17 In addition to what was outlined in the 05 December report to Committee, CLD have regular weekly bookings in the hubs for the delivery of Solihull parenting groups, holiday period bookings and staff and partnership zone usage through term time. An ASN Family Easter programme was held at the Newmains Hub during the holiday period, welcoming eight families who enjoyed a range of activities and offering a welcoming space where families could come together, take part in engaging activities and access support.
- 2.18 The Adult Learning team now delivers the “Digital Skills for Life” project for adults across North Lanarkshire. Currently groups for this project are delivered within a range of community and library-based settings with numbers ranging from 5 to 12 individuals attending. The community hubs present additional opportunities for the project to

engage with local people in places they often go in the heart of the areas in which they live. Through the hubs CLD practitioners are enabled to engage with parents and families, providing them with the ability to gain key digital skills to support their children and young people. Over the coming year we hope to have new groups within the hubs that improve the digital skills of local people within their communities, building on the pilot being introduced to Chryston Community Hub described in section 2.38.

Housing support

2.19 Wishaw/Shotts locality team use the Newmains and St Brigid's Hub to facilitate weekly void meetings between Housing Services, Property Services and Mears. With the recent First Stop Shop (FSS) consultation and review approved at Committee on 13 March 2025 and the planned integration of support into the locality housing model more housing related functions will be delivered from hubs, and in partnership with the tackling poverty team and Routes to Work, in the coming months including:

- Housing surgeries, both locality management and central rents teams
- Financial assessment & income maximisation
- Support with employability pathways through co-location with routes to work colleagues
- Homes First client reviews
- Chairperson's quarterly meetings

2.20 These functions have been identified based on knowledge of demand and they set out to deliver support to our highest priority communities whilst addressing the challenges presented by the current financial landscape. The appointment of the Hub Coordinator working in partnership with council services will ensure resources are used effectively and efficiently and allow for shared knowledge across teams, particularly with the plans to leverage use of digital zones.

2.21 The tenant participation team are beginning to use the hub shared workspaces when working in the local community and the Annual Tenant's conference for 2025 will be held at Chryston hub. See testimonial in **Appendix 10** from a tenant participation officer who regularly accesses Riverbank hub.

Tackling Poverty

2.22 In 2025, the Tackling Poverty Team continue to operate within the Hubs carrying out the day-to-day activities listed below, and from 29 April began to offer appointments for residents in the Newmains Hub, Riverbank Hub and Chryston Hub in tandem with Routes to Work.

- Continue operating from hubs to be based within the community
- Provide a face-to-face service through interviews relative to income maximisation, money advice, and form filling/assisted self-service
- Establish a diarised appointment service for mandatory reconsiderations and appeals
- Deliver financial education sessions
- Enable greater collaborative working with other Council Services and Partners
- Work locally with new voluntary and third sector groups in the community that have not been engaged previously

2.23 A diarised appointment service for mandatory reconsideration and appeals in Newmains, Riverbank and Chryston Hubs took effect from May 2025. With our

continuing presence in the Hubs, we are further developing our collaborative working with other services and partners, whilst increasing our financial education offer via Multiply Project (Sum it Up), through 2025.

University Health & Social Care partnership (UH&SCP) / Adult Social Work

- 2.24 An initial scoping meeting at Chryston Community Hub took place with UH&SCP colleagues in January 2025 to discuss how to increase health promotion and early intervention support from hubs as we implement the national 'Getting it Right For Everyone' (GIRFE) practice framework. This resulted in the agreed delivery of cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) and physio sessions from the Newmains & St Brigid's community hub and planned use of Riverbank community hub to host Perinatal Mental Health services i.e. a 'Finding Me' group with new parents with babies up to 1-year old from 20 August, as well as a 'Circle of Security' peer support new parent group from 03 October 2025. Further plans to expand and target other areas are in planning. UH&SCP teams are visiting and using spaces with teams to build greater awareness of the hubs and their spaces.
- 2.25 In recognition of the Northern Corridor local outcome improvement plan (LOIP's) priority around 'Health Inequalities' and need for focused action in this area, a planning session took place in April 2025 at Chryston hub to initiate improvement action. The Integrated Joint Board (IJB) meeting is also planned at Chryston hub for August 2025.
- 2.26 At Chryston community hub NHS services deliver appointments from the health wing of the hub (**see Appendix 4**) and includes addiction and rehab services, anticoagulant, CAMHS Neuro, child immunisation, midwifery, phlebotomy, physio, podiatry, psychological therapy, sexual health clinic, speech and language therapy and treatment room. Self-referral services are promoted across wings in the hub. A Health Walk now leaves from the hub each Friday morning. An ActiveNL [Slim Start](#) class starts on 11 June 2025, and new fitness classes are in planning to respond to the ActiveNL waiting list in the area. Further developments will be taken forward as part of the LOIP subgroup mentioned above in section 2.25.
- 2.27 In partnership with UH&SCP, Strathclyde University and Mari One digital health care solutions the operating model team and colleagues from Active and Creative Communities supported the delivery of phase 1 of a remote health monitoring project with a view, longer term, to facilitating pre-frailty interventions. A cohort of participants who are Active60 members took part following their involvement in GIRFE co-design work. The participants were monitored through wearable devices at home and attended weekly drop-in clinics at Newmains & St Brigid's Community Hub (**see Appendix 6**). Phase 1 had a 100% retention rate with the testing of devices proving reliable. Plans for phase 2 will seek to scale the project to accommodate c.250 people, dependent upon approved funding, with the hubs continuing to support our place-based delivery approach.
- 2.28 Changing places toilets within the community hubs have had their first annual inspection with a maintenance plan now in place. Engagement with colleagues in UH&SCP and Promoting a more inclusive society (PAMIS) has resulted in these spaces being promoted to the local community for use, this will support work to enhance our offer for those who need. Wider partnership work is underway across Council services following an assessment of existing known facilities across our asset portfolio in support of our equalities and carers strategy deliverables.
- 2.29 The NL Disability Forum commissioned by the UH&SCP and fundamental to our community planning provide support to promote good mental, physical and emotional

wellbeing. They have a weekly presence in each community hub as illustrated in **Appendix 4**. Further discussions are underway relative to the presence of the Community Connectors as we see greater service integration and an increase in footfall at the hubs during 2025.

- 2.30 Building on this, the UH&SCP making life easier (MLE) and disability information team visited each of the hubs over April 2025 and are planning to trial the delivery of blue badge assessments and MLE clinics promoting the online support available and offering assisted self-service support in the local community.
- 2.31 In support of our commitment to being a trauma informed organisation and following the launch of a Trauma Design in the built environment toolkit in May 2025, as presented to Wellbeing and Tackling Poverty Committee on 25 April 2025, we are working in partnership with Health Improvement colleagues to implement annual trauma walk throughs of the hubs and other service delivery spaces. This also supports our equalities strategy deliverables under approved outcome 8 “Our buildings, places and spaces are safe, vibrant, inclusive and accessible, better serving the needs of people with protected characteristics through effective planning, design and development”. Sections 2.42 through 2.55 later in the report also affirms our attention to trauma design and improvements and space adaptations to enhance the customer experience.

Active and creative communities

- 2.32 The local provision of Yoga and Zumba fitness classes at Newmains & St Brigid’s Hub has been running for over a year now. The success of these continues to grow with a new body attack class being offered from April. See **Appendix 7** for information on uptake and testimonials - note that there is a general behaviour of drop offs after the post-Christmas period, attendance rises again over the course of the year. Active and Creative Communities (ACC) are part of all hub delivery boards with work underway at each hub to identify further opportunities to work together, including introduction of [Slim Start sessions](#), enhancing our family support offer (described in sections 2.11 through 2.16) through the provision of childcare/activity groups with FHANS and CLD, as well as activity programmes to leverage the outdoor gyms installed at the hubs, support staff wellbeing and respond to feedback from the Chryston Community as activities move into the new Chryston high school extension within the wider Chryston hub campus.

Employability support

- 2.33 Council funded employability services have become increasingly represented in Hubs through the ALEO Routes to Work Ltd offering employability information sessions and booked appointments over the last 6 months. These Hub sessions complement the existing network of sessions run by the organisation in community facilities across North Lanarkshire. The sessions continue to offer support to the target groups for employability that are economically inactive, unemployed, or underemployed with a particular focus on low-income parents.
- 2.34 There has also been increased integration with other services present in the hubs such as family support, tackling poverty and CLD given the shared priorities of these services with employability. Sustained and increased presence in local Hubs and increased integration with other services continues to be the aim for 2025/26 and as we move forward, and the hub model grows.

Community led approaches and increasing third sector presence

- 2.35 There have been several community-led activities taking place across the hubs in areas of active travel, sport, fitness, intergenerational digital skills, and affordable access to the arts. A community-led approach, approved by Committee following the 16 March 2023 report, is key to phase two of the delivery model to foster community engagement, create more collaborative relationships and strengthen local connections with the hubs. The approved investment in the hub coordinator roles will only grow the community-led approach and help to facilitate an increase in local offerings through 2025/26 building on the case studies provided in **Appendixes 8-10**. Consequently, the community consultation survey developed in 2023 has been updated (see link to digital version in **Appendix 11**) to support engagement and participation during Q1 and Q2 2025/26 and this will be supported and promoted through the Working with Communities framework.

Promoting active travel

- 2.36 Our work across the hubs aims to increase use of the active travel infrastructure and promote walking, wheeling and cycling. In March 2025 Getting Better Together Shotts (GBT) delivered 3 cycle days at the Newmains & St Brigid's, and Chryston hubs in partnership with the community hub co-ordinator and education and families.

GBT are an experienced provider of cycling initiatives across North Lanarkshire delivering SVQF qualifications and training opportunities with different schools. These events were part of a 'Paths for All' funded initiative to increase access to cycling. On the day young people were encouraged to cycle to school where they had their bike serviced by a qualified mechanic. Where a basic service could not be provided on the day the young people were given a voucher to use at 'Trackside Bikes' the GBT training facility. Any young people who did not have bikes with them got access to bikes and scooters by GBT for fun activities. GBT will continue to work with education to provide families with a free bike, where a need is identified. **Appendix 8** provides more detail, imagery and testimonials with **Appendix 15** demonstrating new infrastructure to help advance our plans in this area.

Intergenerational digital skills programme(s) and digital safety initiative

- 2.37 A 4-week partnership project ran during March 2025 with the Newmains Community Trust (NCT). This was a digital intergenerational project with ten P7 school pupils and a group of 4 older adults' from Overtown 'The Gamechangers'. The project was designed and coordinated by a Community Education student from University West of Scotland (UWS) on placement at the NCT. It was based on an identified need for increasing digital skills among the older adult group. The NCT recognised that the hub facilities including e-learning zone, and multi-purpose rooms would be a good fit for delivery of the project. On Tuesday afternoons participants met in the hub where P7 pupils shared their digital knowledge with adults and helped solve basic problems on their devices e.g. text size on mobiles, using Skype, and online shopping. See **Appendix 9** for feedback.
- 2.38 At Chryston Community Hub, the Hub Co-ordinator has been engaging in needs-based conversations with the Head Teacher and Parent Council which led to a request for support around online safety. It was identified that young people and their parents have been negatively affected e.g. instances where young people have faced confrontation due to a breakdown in online relationships with peers, explicit content being viewed online content, and an identification of a lack of knowledge and understanding of how parents can ensure their young people are safe online. Subsequently the Hub

Coordinator has partnered with Community Learning and Development (CLD) Digital Skills for Life team to develop a learning course on online safety for local parents. This course is currently being advertised to parents in the Chryston area and will commence in May 2025. Further opportunity to scale this given the common concern across communities served by our hubs and leveraging whole family wellbeing funding and links with the third sector is being explored.

Sport and fitness - Get Walking Lanarkshire

- 2.39 Under the umbrella of 'Paths for All' this is a pan Lanarkshire project with NHS Lanarkshire. The project runs biweekly on Saturday mornings and starts and ends at Riverbank Community Hub. The aim of the project is to tackle physical inactivity, poor mental health, increase social inclusion, improve health and transport inequalities through the delivery of volunteer-led community health walks across Lanarkshire. Health walks are free, no longer than an hour, led by trained volunteers on risk-assessed paths and go at a gentle pace. We are promoting wider use of the hubs with participants and looking at how the organisers can use the community room for walk leader training days or volunteer meetings. See imagery in **Appendix 10**.

Sport and fitness - Bushido Karate Club

- 2.40 This weekly class, running on a Monday evening, was started as a community member felt there was no local sports club for the young people within the area to get involved in. When the Riverbank Community Hub opened it was seen as an ideal venue and central location to provide an opportunity. The class has members training from the age of 6 years, which also includes parents training alongside their children, allowing for family support for all to get involved in without age being a barrier. The club welcomes everyone to come along and train and enjoy the benefits of martial arts with the focus on Health and Wellbeing. The class seeks to support its members through an increase in confidence, motivation and life skills learned while having fun, learning a new sport and making new friends. Currently there are around 14 students training weekly and through the Community Hub Coordinator they are looking for support to grow the club further through 2025. See promotional leaflet and the club in action at **Appendix 10**.

Affordable theatre in the local community

- 2.41 A pilot project is in planning at the Newmains & St Brigid's hub with the community theatre group 'Spotlight Shotts.' Given the potential of the drama box and theatre space provided in the hub, and the opportunity to maximise usage of these spaces, the group are working alongside the community hub co-ordinator to bring an Autumn show to the Newmains Community. It will be a Halloween special of the famous 'Singing Kettle' on 12 October 2025. The aim of this initiative is to provide low-cost access to the arts within the heart of communities to otherwise excluded groups contributing to our aspirations around social value and inspiring brighter futures. There is potential to scale this across the other hubs if the pilot successful.

Business process improvements, hub adaptations and infrastructure enhancements all critical to successful operation of the hubs and advancing our plans

Visitor management and customer experience

- 2.42 Members will recall from key learnings outlined in the 05 June 2024 report, and associated community survey feedback, that there is still work to do to break down the perception of hubs as schools. It's key that the operating model delivery team continue to assess the customer experience as part of a data led approach to guiding decisions and future planning as the hub network grows, and in support of our commitment to being a trauma informed organisation as presented to Wellbeing and Tackling Poverty Committee on 25 April 2025. Consequently, a visitor management process has been implemented that seeks to ensure a welcoming experience for external partners and visitors, and to reduce the confusion that on site education staff and facilities support staff have experienced with visitors attending for non-education services.
- 2.43 A sign-in process has been introduced that helps the coordinators to track hub usage and allow on site staff to know who is using hub spaces. A numbered fob can now be signed out to visitors allowing appropriate access to identified areas whilst maintaining safety and security protocols relative to safeguarding. This ensures easy access to welfare facilities, shared space for agile working and booked community spaces with fobs left in a drop box and signed out on exit.
- 2.44 A customer experience survey is also now available via QR code to capture real time user experiences and allow any improvement action to be taken or indeed positive feedback to be acknowledged. Other survey versions will be available as required (see **Appendix 12** for digital version).
- 2.45 Digital information screens are in the process of being installed at each hub. Indoors these will be connected to the Council's OneLan system, to supplement the leaflet and poster resources on display. This is to enhance sharing of information and signposting of supports, activities and services digitally in reception and waiting areas and responds to feedback from the GIRFE co-design process on community hubs. Outdoors new digital monoliths have been installed to support the promotion of active travel routes, health, and wellbeing supports, activities and services - **see Appendix 15**.

Corporate Booking System and online presence

- 2.46 The Council corporate booking system is in the early stages of implementation with the functionality for community hubs to be tested within the current phase. Hub booking processes have been one of the most challenging aspects of advancing the hub model with legacy systems being phased out with no replacement and required workarounds and manual processes being put in place by all teams as we transition towards the new corporate solution. We continue to work closely with Community Facilities, to find improved and responsive solutions for self-managing bookings. In the interim the coordinators have created a calendar of all current bookings and block bookings for their hubs as illustrated in **Appendix 4**.
- 2.47 Online presence of the hubs on the Council's website and maximising use of the MyTown social media channels will be taken forward in Q2 and Q3 2025/36 linking into a wider channel review by the Communications team. Digital Community Hub newsletters have been created as shown in **Appendix 13 and 14** to connect people and community organisations, share information about activities and promote upcoming events, with paper versions available in the hubs and as requested.

Printing and public wifi

- 2.48 Public WIFI is now available in all community hubs, issues over connectivity reliability is being addressed by the digital team. Ethernet cables have also been supplied to improve connectivity when required to the Council network for staff. Printing facilities across all hubs was introduced from 19 April 2025 as part of the unifirollout with access for non-Council staff and partners as the next phase.

Defibrillator installation

- 2.49 HSE outlines that to comply with the Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1981, employers are not required to install a defibrillator (except for schools that are now required by the Department of Education to have at least one AED on the premises). As part of good practice, and with the consideration of increasing footfall at the hubs and that sports clubs are regularly using the hub facilities for physical activity, work is being undertaken to install a defibrillator at the Newmains & St Brigid's community hub in the first instance. Taking forward lessons learned it recommended that all future hubs have this in mind.

Active travel 'soft' infrastructure

- 2.50 The new active travel 'soft' infrastructure across the hubs is now in place such as the digital monoliths mentioned at section 2.37, active travel route information boards, bike repair stations, cycle parking and lockable bike shelters. Work is underway to increase use of these facilities through community engagement as well as education and training outlined in **Appendix 8**. Examples of the infrastructure installed is in **Appendix 15**.

Space reconfiguration and signage

- 2.51 Based on customer feedback some spaces have been reconfigured to suit ways of working. Both meeting rooms in each hub now have appropriate equipment for working in, this includes a small desk, desk chair and ethernet cables. They also have adjustable laptop tables for working on seated spaces. There is new artwork in spaces removing the clinical feel and in-line with trauma informed design create space that is calming, comfortable and soothing. We are also exploring options for adjustable lighting.
- 2.52 The conference room in Newmains & St Brigid's has been re-designed to a 'community room' to remove the corporate association and furniture changes have made the space more flexible. The static boardroom table has been replaced with folding tables on wheels which allows floor space to be utilised at full potential. The room also has new artwork added to improve aesthetics.
- 2.53 Signage at the hubs has been or is in the process of being enhanced to support improved wayfinding and frosted and reflective glass manifestations have now been added to spaces to offer greater privacy and to respond to recommendations from the NL Disability Access Panel to improve access and wider social inclusion.
- 2.54 Work has been carried out to ensure the staff & partnership zones are operating at their full potential and is overcoming the shift in culture for staff relative to co-location and integration. The Council code of conduct, updated in January 2025, acknowledges our expectation of all staff to operate with professional integrity and demonstrate high standards of personal and professional conduct while undertaking their duties and responsibilities and therefore supports a welcoming environment for partners who have

a presence in the community hubs. Consideration continues to be given to staff well-being as individuals adjust to new ways of working and sharing workspaces and hub users are provided with access to refreshments and crockery. Enhancements will be looked at to identified outdoor staff spaces during 2025, and in partnership with colleagues in the restorative justice team to provide outdoor seating and furniture.

Hub maintenance and shared responsibilities

- 2.55 A review of required repairs and maintenance has recently been carried out to ensure all hubs areas are regularly maintained and adhering to set standards. The shared responsibility for the maintenance of areas includes upkeep of outdoor spaces (e.g. grass cutting, weeding, pruning, maintenance of landscaped areas and general tidiness), and the servicing of changing places rooms and staff & partnership zone spaces. As well as the overall tidiness and upkeep of spaces in line with our investment in trauma design. A budget of shared contributions has been put in place to ensure necessary work is carried out and the burden does not fall with education establishments located in the hubs. A RACI template has been developed to strengthen the handover process linked to the introduction of future new build community hubs to ensure consistency of understanding around roles and responsibilities of everyone involved in the running of the community hubs.

Forward plan of next steps and the risks and mitigating action for this phase

2.56 Next steps

1. Continued presence of Hub Coordinators at Community Boards.
2. Ongoing engagement with community planning partners, local community organisations, community councils and wider stakeholders in partnership with the community partnership team in line with the working with communities framework.
3. Supporting the implementation of the community wealth building approach in plans.
4. Partnership working with the Planning team in the Place service to share intelligence relative to future design, planning and development of hubs linking to the results of the Your Place Survey and joint work on asset mapping within Transforming Places POW.
5. Following the launch of the 'Trauma Design in the built environment toolkit' in Q1 2025, continue to ensure that trauma design is applied to all future hubs. Annual trauma walk throughs implemented.
6. Input to future hub design in partnership with the hub development and strategy team and appointed architectural design teams, as well as presence at the Town and Community Hub steering group. With formal lessons learned being shared with the hub design and strategy teams.
7. Scenario planning for future hubs with services based on their One Workforce plans and strategic workforce planning, progressing their indication of which teams and staff can operate from hubs in the future as the model scales.
8. As part of the scenario planning there will be a further and wider data analysis exercise on customer demand on Council services and community use/letting of spaces across assets as we seek to promote an asset-based community development approach. This analysis will enable an up-to-date understanding around main areas of enquiry and demand as well as who is using our assets, for what and when to aid future planning.
9. Ongoing implementation of the single telephony solution, which is critical to the front end of the operating model in terms of both improving the customer experience and providing intelligence on what and who is accessing support and services and building our internal capacity to work in new and more efficient digital

ways to respond to customer demand. The telephony solution is equally important to get it right for people who may present at the hub for a gateway to other supports and services.

10. Participation in the Digital NL POW 'Improving the Customer Experience' group to link dependencies and particularly in the areas of digital inclusion, front end customer experience and trauma informed organisation.
11. Continue to strengthen linkages with the Transforming Places POW, the Open Space Strategy and the Local Development Plan 2 (NLLDP2) including bringing together consultative and participatory feedback across communities as we seek to improve planning, design and development relative to our investment programme and more closely connect the work of the operating model transition as we shape places to improve health equity and outcomes.
12. Ongoing planning through the hub delivery groups with performance frameworks developed linking to the benefits realisation framework as plans continue to develop.

Risks and mitigating actions

2.57

Risk	Status	Mitigating action
1) Ability to enhance customer experience through the approved implementation of a Corporate Booking System with the community facilities team at the pace needed to maximise use of hubs. This affects the front-end experience for bookers (tied to work to enhance the Council website content/pages in the One Service POW) and the back-end reporting functionality. Not having effective systems is causing strain on all teams with workarounds having to be put in place, potential duplication in effort and reliance on manual processes that conflict with our DigitalNL ambitions.	Due to slippage around proof of concept for hubs as part of the corporate booking system implementation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Digital and ACC agreement to fund and dedicate project resource at the front end of the PoC to support community facilities team and OMDT. OMDT allocated lead within the team to prioritise attention to this. Approved as a shared deliverable in the plan for NL POW between Community Operations and Strategy and Engagement functions with the PoC dependent upon community facilities adopting the new system successfully for both front end and back-end functionality. Data cleansing and analysis carried out by the OMDT using spreadsheet data provided by Community Facilities in the interim until skills are developed in the team and the system is implemented with required reporting to maintain a data led approach to future plans. Active involvement as part of the digital NL POW and improving the customer experience group
2) Customer experience also includes the reliability of public Wi-Fi connectivity and implementation of printing facilities for external partners	Promotion of public Wi-Fi availability does not match with user experience at present, with partners/external	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wider digital requirements have been identified for hubs and OMDT are working with digital teams to prioritise the hubs in delivery plans and implementation of digital infrastructure

	organisations and individuals working off hotspots	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issues are being raised quickly through tickets by the hub coordinators and being pursued or escalated with colleagues to find solutions • Investigation with provider over performance quality
Hubs and their offer having a consistent online presence, and multi-channel communications available		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work underway to build an online presence for hubs and maximise MyTown channels to promote activity • Creative imagery to support hub promotion and participation in development • Digital screen installation at hubs to enhance customer experience and signposting
Ability to be demand responsive to community needs whilst maintaining required governance requirements		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operating model delivery manager working effectively across plan for NL POW boards and with officers • Employment of hub coordinators and success of partnership relationships developed evidenced through their hub delivery and in partnership with other Council officers across POW deliverables • Hub delivery groups as a vehicle for participants to strengthen networks • Hub coordinators knowledge of local area and network, leveraging community resources where possible incl. grant funded organisations and leveraging available funding through the boards • Working with the community partnership team through the working with communities' approaches.
Ensuring lessons learned are carried forward into future hub projects and action is not limited by financial constraints.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hub steering group as a vehicle to share learnings and build learnings requirements into tender process and budget allowances • Ongoing liaison with hub strategy and development team, as well as corporate repairs and maintenance, property teams
Hub maintenance, hub handover processes to be improved to ensure consistent clarity around some of the operational maintenance aspects.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Steps have been taken to provide a maintenance schedule for hubs to ensure shared responsibility in line with facilities RACI matrix. The OMDT will ensure processes are in place as necessary which has so far included, changing places maintenance and outdoor spaces out-with school and facility remit.

Hub maintenance relative to the areas within the schools that offer space for an increased provision at seasonal times and holidays tend to be closed for maintenance work.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hub Coordinators to be part of future handover and decant meetings. • Lessons learned completed for each hub and communicated with Hub Development and Hub Strategy Teams. • Hub coordinator is aware of planned works schedules with corporate repairs and facilities teams to look at alternative provision of spaces where needed.
Resource capacity to enable future planning including analyst support for scenario planning for future hubs.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look across the strategy and engagement team as it reshapes to identify support, as well as leverage other analytical skills within the wider hub team.
One service approach – All council services, commissioned partners and community groups effectively using the space alongside education.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress has been made with key Council services and partners to leverage the hubs for service delivery. This is supported by the plan for NL POW governance structure. • Ensuring the integration of partners within the hubs is working effectively alongside education service delivery. Engagement with education staff, HT's, EFM's and COs ongoing. • There is a calendar of services, partners and third sector organisations using the hubs regularly with an increase in community activity and partnership projects alongside education as alternative curriculum choices.
Potential tension with community councils and organisations who operate in the local area from other assets and perceived threat of hubs to their delivery model.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hub Coordinator continued presence at community boards and building relationships with organisations in their areas in support of asset-based community development. • Community organisations visiting the Hubs and meeting the coordinators exploring opportunities to work together given we serve the same people across our communities and aspire to leverage all resources available through collaboration.

3. Measures of success

- 3.1 Several measures are outlined in the project brief against the three phases of delivery to show how we are delivering for communities through improved outcomes and

support the management of risk/mitigate impacts of adverse events. Each hub will in the coming months develop its own impact framework through the hub delivery board given the local context and blend of integrated service provision, wider governance considerations.

- 3.2 Measures 1-7 are in process with evidence gathered corporately or by specific teams, such as those described in section 2.15 and 2.16 of the report. Measures 8, 9 will be supported by the new visitor management processes and service data in line with their own plans, 10 to 13 are medium to longer term as the hub model develops.

What		How	S/M/L term
1	Occupancy and usage of hub spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activity Analysis reporting Quantifiable income generation from Community Facilities and ACC services 	Short term
2	Hub usage data and user feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activity analysis of spaces Qualitative feedback from people received through statutory and non-statutory service providers, case studies and testimonials. Customer experience survey 	Short term
3	Level of integrated working/partnerships evidenced in hub delivery plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No. of organisations using hub spaces Evidence of joined work on supports, activities and programmes Range of services co-located and working together in hub timetable 	Short to medium term
4	Social media reach/user feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social media data from comms team once channels are leveraged and web pages completed/increased use of MyTown pages. Case studies, testimonials and direct feedback from statutory and non-statutory services, organisations using hubs. Customer experience survey 	Short to medium term
5	Access and engagement by target groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uptake of support, activities or services. Council functions and other organisations collect and report their own data to be fed into hub performance outcome framework (in development). Qualitative feedback from testimonials and case studies 	Medium term
6	No. of contacts/people supported relative to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uptake of support, activities or services. Council 	Medium term

	general advice, financial inclusion/debt money advice, literacy/language skills/qualifications, employability, digital inclusion etc.	<p>functions and other organisations collect and report their own data to be fed into hub performance outcome framework (in development).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualitative feedback from testimonials and case studies 	
7	Reduction in demand for additional/intensive statutory services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uptake of support, activities or services. Council functions and other organisations collect and report their own data to be fed into hub performance outcome framework (in development). • Reduction in referrals to additional/intensive services • Qualitative feedback from testimonials and case studies (in development with early positive visibility of reduction in escalation to SW) 	Medium term
8	Number of people accessing assisted self-service in the hubs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visitor management and onsite informal tracking of signposting by hub coordinators. 	Medium term
9	Comparison of usage across assets within NLC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activity analysis of use of spaces • Visitor management system • Information gathered by services/organisations as to how and what people are accessing and where. 	Medium term
10	Progress of LOIP's and outcomes agreed as part of future hub delivery plans that contribute to the outcomes set in the plan for North Lanarkshire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alignment with developing hub offer and LOIP priorities and connections to plan for NL health check indicators • Connections to community council/local orgs action plans 	Medium to long term
11	Number of organisations applying for/receiving grant funding contributing to delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholder map of local organisations • Hub coordinators mapping with community partnership team which are contributing 	Medium to longer term
12	Number of volunteering or placement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteering embedded within family support or other services 	Medium to longer term


	opportunities available in hubs		
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3.3 The programme overall:

- Provide an operational focus point for other projects and programmes to realise their financial and non-financial benefits e.g., shared asset rationalisation, service reconfiguration, service re-design proposals for integrated provision

4. Supporting documentation

- Appendix 1- Three approved phases of the operating model delivery plan
- Appendix 2- HUB activity analysis for each community hub
- Appendix 3- From HUB objectives to plan for NL outcomes Newmains example
- Appendix 4- HUB timetable showing current usage and planned events/activity
- Appendix 5- Whole family support activity, case study and flash report
- Appendix 6- Newmains & St Brigid's HUB - Remote Health Monitoring Project (Phase 1)
- Appendix 7- Newmains & St Brigid's Yoga & Zumba classes
- Appendix 8- Newmains & St Brigid's and Chryston HUB's - Active Travel projects March 25'
- Appendix 9- Newmains & St Brigid's HUB – Intergenerational digital skills project, Feb 25'
- Appendix 10- Riverbank HUB – Sport and fitness activities
- Appendix 11- [Community consultation survey](#)
- Appendix 12- [Customer experience survey](#)
- Appendix 13- [Newmains Community Hub newsletter May 25](#)
- Appendix 14- [Chryston Community Hub newsletter May 25](#)
- Appendix 15- Examples of the digital information screens, Active travel infrastructure and outdoor gym equipment installed at HUB's



Name Stephen Penman
Title Chief Officer, (Strategy and Engagement)

5. Impacts

5.1 Public Sector Equality Duty and Fairer Scotland Duty

Does the report contain information that has an impact as a result of the Public Sector Equality Duty and/or Fairer Scotland Duty?

Yes ☒ No ☐

If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?

The implementation of town and community hubs and ambitions to reduce the inequalities caused by socio economic disadvantage align with the requirements of the Fairer Scotland Duty.

The EQIA for phase 2 has been completed and EQIA's are completed for required projects and in partnership with services.

If Yes, has an assessment been carried out and published on the council's website? <https://www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/your-community/equalities/equality-and-fairer-scotland-duty-impact-assessments>

Yes ☒ No ☐

5.2 Financial impact

Does the report contain any financial impacts?

Yes ☒ No ☐

If Yes, have all relevant financial impacts been discussed and agreed with Finance?

Yes ☒ No ☐

If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?

The strategic capital investment programme allocation is a key factor in the development of an operating model for the effective delivery of services within the heart of communities. As members will be aware both SARIS and the delivery of new town and community hubs both have the capacity to support these objectives. While the development of new hubs may increase development costs marginally there are significant benefits to be delivered in the associated rationalisation of the Council's estate and proven operational advantages associated with the implementation of the revised operating model of service delivery.

5.3 HR policy impact

Does the report contain any HR policy or procedure impacts?

Yes ☒ No ☐

If Yes, have all relevant HR impacts been discussed and agreed with People Resources?

Yes ☒ No ☐

If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?

The impact of any workforce changes emerging during phases of the programme will be dealt with in line with the council's Managing Workforce Change - Framework Guidance.

We must ensure that any changes to approaches as our future workplace model matures are reviewed and supported by policies and guidance. Full engagement with Trade Unions will be taken forward as required.

Safety and wellbeing implications around access, safety and security and also safeguarding. Safety and security guidance is continually updated and made available on the future workplace section of myNL. The safety and wellbeing team will continue to work with local teams to advise appropriate measures are in place at

a local level around safety, security, fire safety and first aid. Communications and engagement with management teams of key workforce groups will also take place as appropriate, and toolbox talks encouraged with staff as necessary. Furthermore, the approach taken is intended to have a positive impact on mental health and wellbeing and TU's will be engaged as appropriate through existing channels. The safety and wellbeing team are engaged on the POW steering group and continue to advise and guide through phases.

5.4 Legal impact

Does the report contain any legal impacts (such as general legal matters, statutory considerations (including employment law considerations), or new legislation)?

Yes ☒ No ☐

If Yes, have all relevant legal impacts been discussed and agreed with Legal and Democratic?

Yes ☒ No ☐

If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?

Extending our use of hub spaces to public sector partners in phase 2 required a Memorandum of Understanding to be in place to support objectives of this agreement and to ensure consideration towards insurance liabilities and statutory requirements around safeguarding. This was supported by legal colleagues who will continue to be engaged through delivery phases – particularly relative to the impacts of public sector reform.

5.5 Data protection impact

Does the report / project / practice contain or involve the processing of personal data?

Yes ☒ No ☐

If Yes, is the processing of this personal data likely to result in a high risk to the data subject?

Yes ☒ No ☐

If Yes, has a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) been carried out and e-mailed to dataprotection@northlan.gov.uk

Yes ☒ No ☐

5.6 Technology / Digital impact

Does the report contain information that has an impact on either technology, digital transformation, service redesign / business change processes, data management, or connectivity / broadband / Wi-Fi?

Yes ☒ No ☐

If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?

There is a specific set of digital requirements if the operating model is to achieve its ambitions. A number of these are already in place and need to be maintained or are in development. There is currently work to pull together emerging requirements and detailed work with the business and digital team on this additional capability and digital infrastructure will be required in support of the model – plans for this are underway and the appropriate governance structures will be applied.

Where the impact identifies a requirement for significant technology change, has an assessment been carried out (or is scheduled to be carried out) by the Enterprise Architecture Governance Group (EAGG)?

Yes ☐ No ☒

5.7 Environmental / Carbon impact

Does the report / project / practice contain information that has an impact on any environmental or carbon matters?

Yes ☒ No ☐

If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?

Enabling staff to work locally has a positive impact on the environment and an individual's carbon footprint around commuting, as well as potential positive health impacts by enabling greater choice and flexibility to how people work. The shift side to that is the utility use/office energy consumption through a work local approach (although within the wider context of shared assets, asset rationalisation and investment in more energy efficient buildings and hubs positive benefits should be realised over time)

5.8 Communications impact

Does the report contain any information that has an impact on the council's communications activities?

Yes ☒ No ☐

If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?

There is significant impact around communication and engagement with communities and with staff – the programme continually has a requirement to align with the emerging direction of our approaches and the 'Working with Communities framework'. Communication and engagement plans are developed throughout each stage of the POW and colleagues from Strategy and Engagement and the Community partnership team continue to be involved throughout phases of delivery.

5.9 Risk impact

Is there a risk impact?

Yes ☒ No ☐

If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the key risks and potential impacts, highlighting where the risk(s) are assessed and recorded (e.g. Corporate or Service or Project Risk Registers), and how they are managed?

The project risks are captured in the project risk register and managed through the programme and projects. The main risks and mitigating actions are described in section 2.57 with a broad summary for the longer-term programme below:

- Finance – delivery of strategic capital investment programme and ongoing review of priorities, risk to savings not being realised through service redesign to transition towards a new operating model. Further opportunity in this phase for financial modelling as hubs work to realise the investment of £66.9m and forward investment.
- Digital – ability to meet the infrastructure and technical support needs either through lack of resources, lack of funds, or alignment of pace
- Political unknowns – implications of savings decisions and public sector reform
- People – challenge of culture change relative to co-location and integrated working to underpin the success of the model
- Communities – ensuring full participation from communities, sharing of insights and intelligence in support of the model and realising the ambition of the Community Boards and working with communities framework.

5.10 Armed Forces Covenant Duty

Does the report require to take due regard of the Armed Forces Covenant Duty (i.e. does it relate to healthcare, housing, or education services for in-Service or ex-Service personnel, or their families, or widow(er)s)?

Yes ☒ No ☐

If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the provision which has been made to ensure there has been appropriate consideration of the particular needs of the Armed Forces community to make sure that they do not face disadvantage compared to other residents in the provision of public services.

- Our approach to participation planning to ensure that all residents with lived experience are included in co-design/co-creation of services, and we engage with relevant organisations
- Completion of the EQIA

5.11 Children's rights and wellbeing impact

Does the report contain any information regarding any council activity, service delivery, policy, or plan that has an impact on children and young people up to the age of 18, or on a specific group of these?

Yes ☒ No ☐

If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact and the provision that has been made to ensure there has been appropriate consideration of the relevant Articles from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

Approach to whole family support outlined in the report.

An overarching CRWIA has been completed as part of the preparation for the new Children's Services Plan 23-26. The Children's Services Plan 23-26 includes priorities and actions on how the Children's Services Partnership will further children's rights and UNCRC in NL.

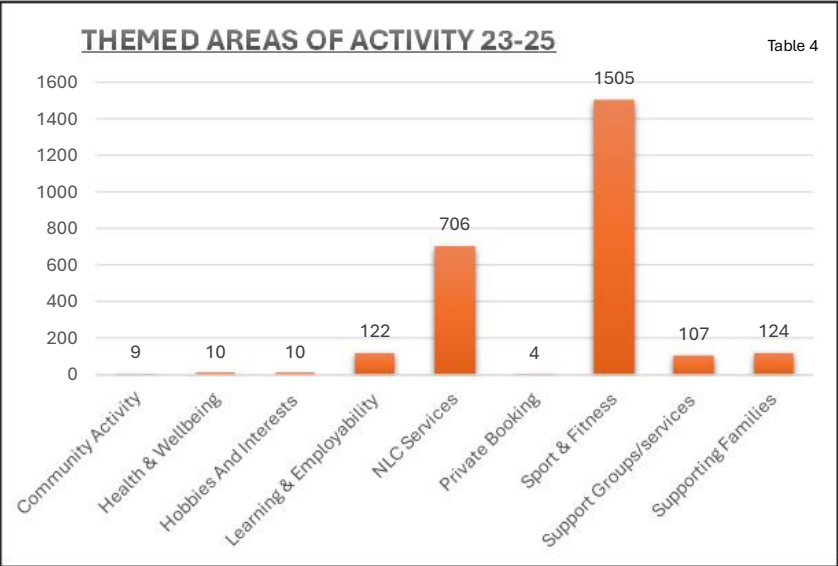
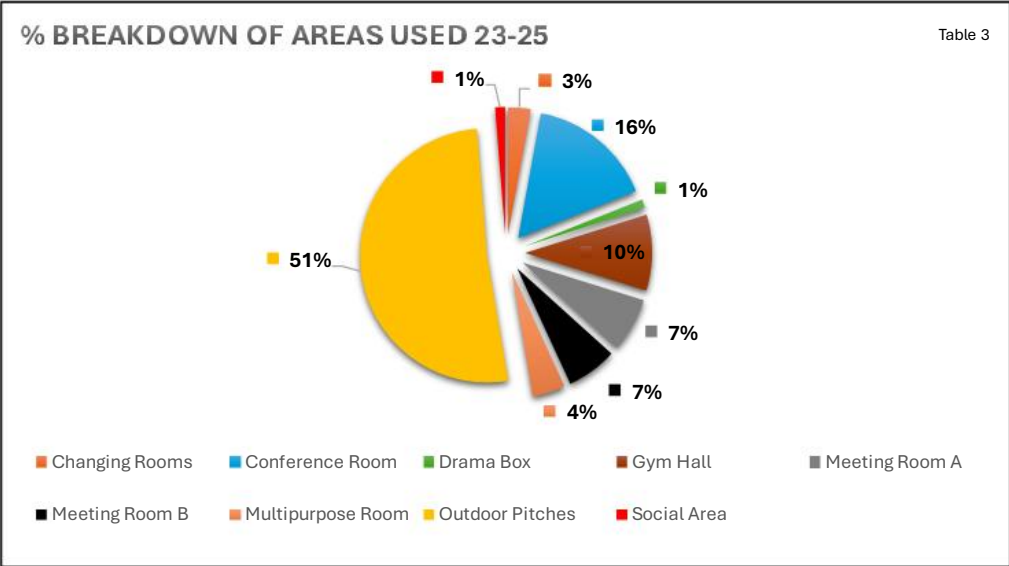
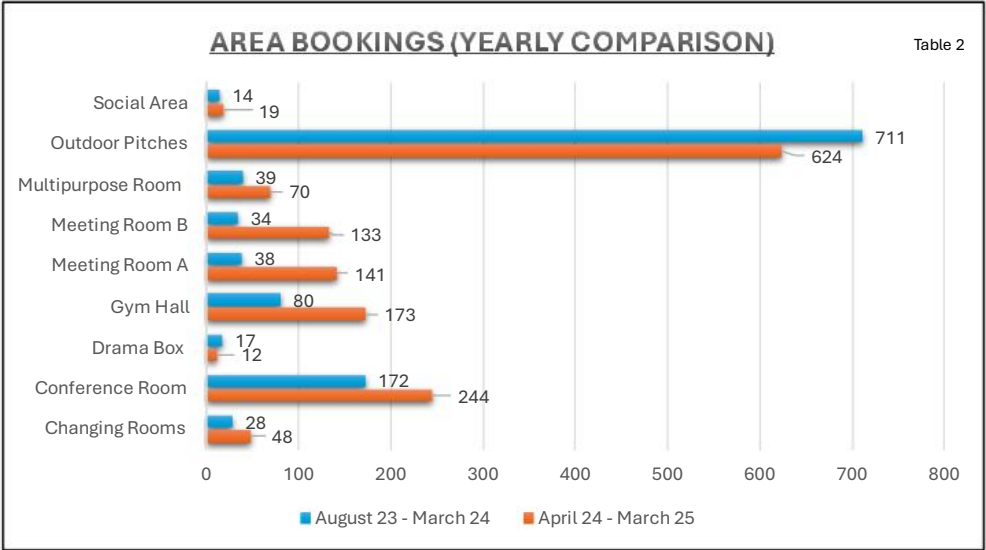
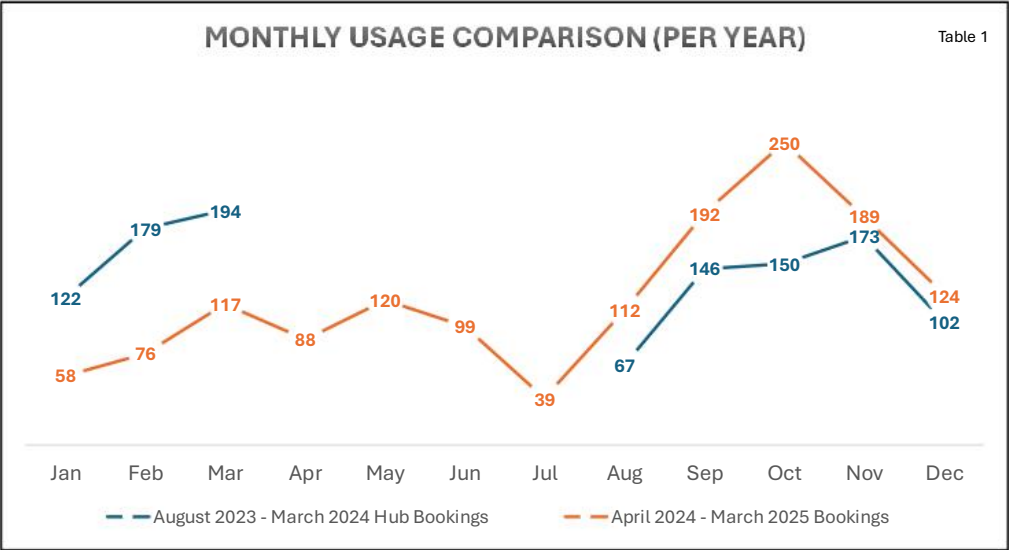
If Yes, has a Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment (CRWIA) been carried out?

Yes ☒ No ☐

Developing the operating model through phases



Appendix 2 – HUB activity analysis (1) - Newmains & St Brigid's: August 2023-March 2024 and April 2024-March 2025



Appendix 2 – HUB activity analysis (2) continued - Newmains & St Brigid's: August 2023-March 2024 and April 2024-March 2025

Usage data has been provided by community facilities and starts from August 2023 as it was when the hubs were set-up on the facilities booking system. Periods of use are split in line with the financial year.

- Year one runs August 2023 – March 2024.
- Year two runs from April 2024 – March 2025.

This data does not capture overall footfall and occupancy of spaces, but Hub coordinators have implemented visitor management processes to track this information more effectively beginning April 2025.

- A total of 2,597 bookings have been made in the Newmains & St Brigid's hub through community facilities.
- 1,133 between August 24 – March 24
- 1,464 between April 24 – March 25

Table 1 on the previous page. shows a comparison of monthly bookings year on year.

Data demonstrates a 26% average increase in bookings in year 2, from previous period August – December 2023. However, bookings between January 2025 – March 2025 of year 2, decreased an average of 50% compared with the previous period in year 1.

No comparative monthly data is available yet for April 2025 – July 2025. However, in April 2024 – July 2024 the trend highlights a decrease in bookings over the holiday periods of Easter and summer holidays.

Table 2. provides a year-on-year comparison of areas booked. Interestingly the only spaces with more bookings in year 1 was the outdoor pitches and drama box. In all other hub spaces, there was an average increase in year 2 of 129% across all the bookable spaces.

Breakdown:

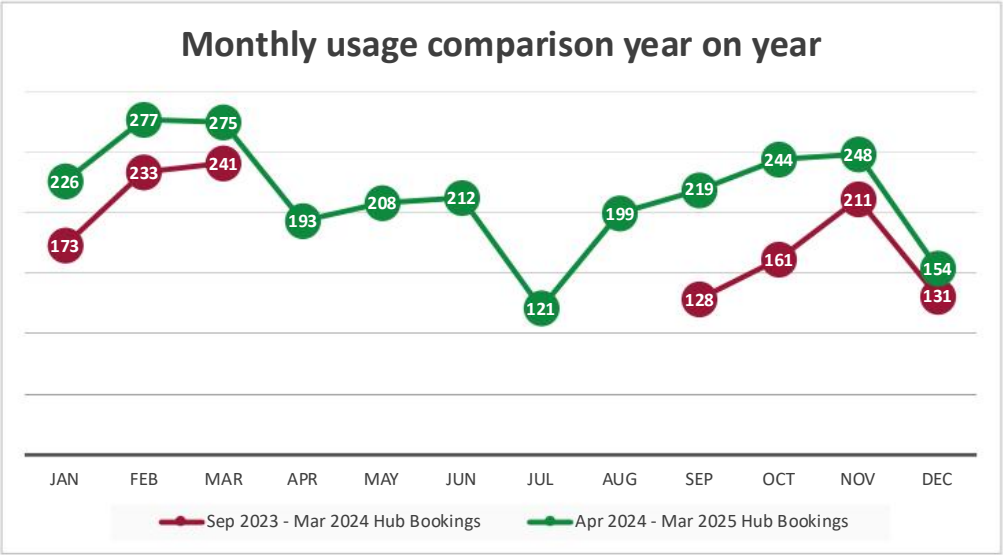
- Social area > 35%
- Multi-purpose room > 80%
- Meeting Room A >270%
- Meeting Room B > 290%
- Gym Hall > 116%
- Conference Room > 42%
- Changing Rooms > 71%

This trend shows a positive increased use of community hub bookable spaces beyond the outdoor pitches.

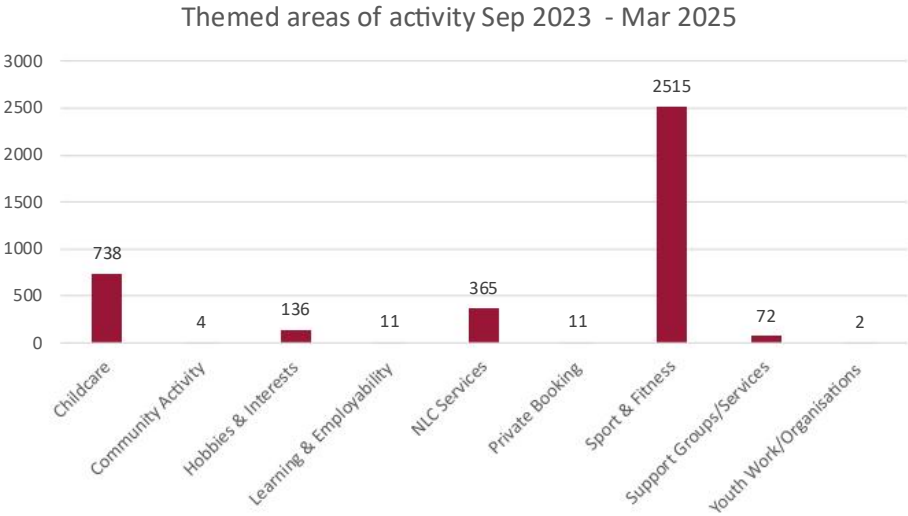
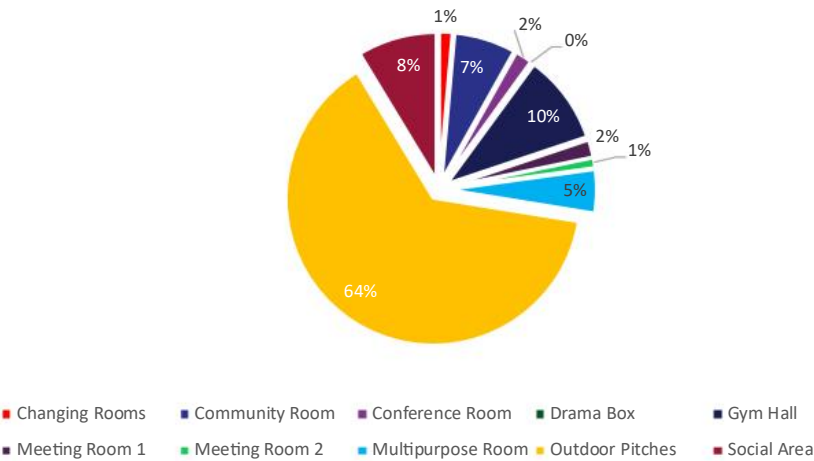
Table 3. provides a % breakdown of all hub areas used to date. (August 2023 – March 2025) It makes clear that the outdoors pitches are the most used spaces with over half of all historical bookings in this area.

Table 4. Supports table 3 data. By providing a breakdown of themed activities within the hub we can see that Sports & Fitness activity is the most recurring use of hub activity. NLC services are primarily made up of education bookings from staff within the schools in the hub.

Appendix 2 – Hub Activity Analysis (2) Riverbank: September 2023-March 2024 and April 2024-March 2025



% of space usage Sep 2023 - Mar 2025



Appendix 2 – Hub Activity analysis (2) continued – Riverbank: September 2023-March 2024 and April 2024-March 2025

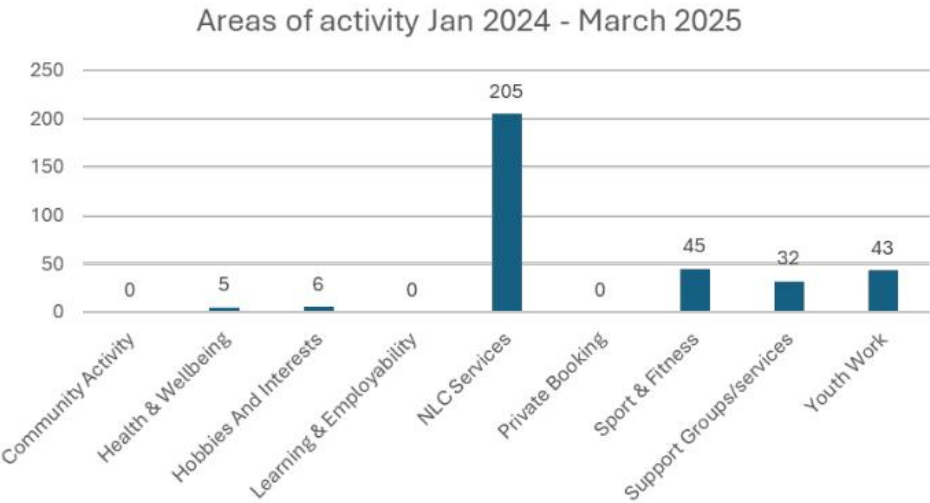
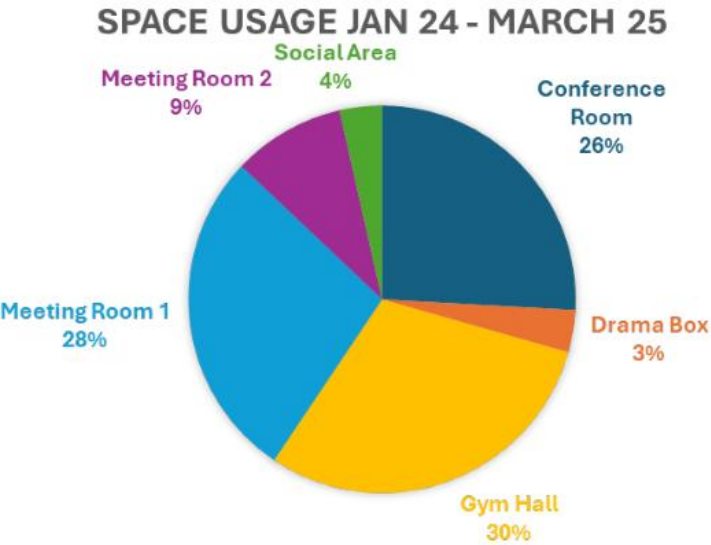
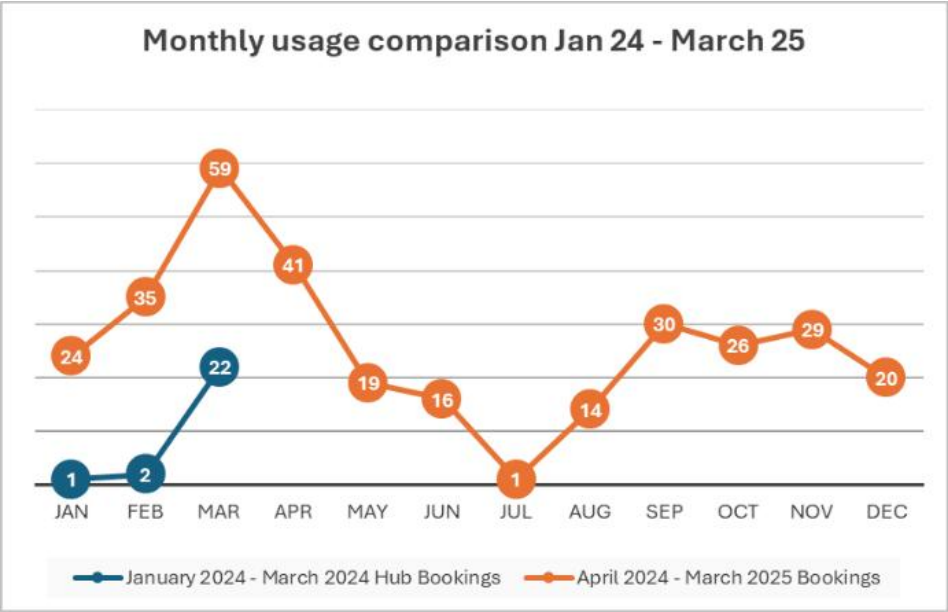
The data in the graphs above reflect the comparison in hub usage at **Riverbank Community Hub** between the periods of when the hub opened in August 2023 up until March 2025 (NOTE: hub bookings commenced in September 2023).

- The most used space within Riverbank Community Hub is the 4G Football pitch which has been booked out 1693 times in 2024/25 in comparison to 765 times in 2023/24 **an increase of 121%**.
- The biggest increase of indoor usage can be seen in the Community Room. This has risen from 58 bookings in 2023/24 to 207 bookings in 2024/25 **an increase of 257%**.
- The highest percentage of usage across both periods is the Gym Hall within the hub. This has 10% of the hub bookings across all the areas on offer.
- For 7 year on year comparable months of facility usage at Riverbank Community Hub between the periods 2023/24 and 2024/25 (Jan, Feb, Mar, Sep, Oct, Nov, Dec), monthly bookings have increased at the hub for those months.
- Since the opening of the hub; the hub has mostly been used for Sport & Fitness bookings, predominately from the football pitch. Childcare and NLC services are also very prominent within Riverbank Community Hub with the deliberate focus on operationalising whole family support.

Areas identified from the analysis for growth and opportunity

- In both the months of July and December there is a drop in hub bookings, this is due to school holiday periods when there is less footfall in and around the hub and local community. This is an opportunity to work with local services and groups to encourage them that the hub is still available for use at these times.
- While there is an increase in Meeting Room (MR) bookings (MR 1 - 5 bookings 2023/24, compared to 68 bookings 2024/25 and in MR 2 – 1 booking 2023/24 compared to 40 in 2024/25) we expect to see growth of usage following reconfiguration of the rooms that have incorporated a workstation based on user feedback.
- Ongoing work with various partners and services and developments in the pipeline should see a positive effect on bookings through community activity, learning & employability and youth work and organisations.

Appendix 2 – HUB activity analysis (3) - Chryston Community HUB January 2024-March 2024 and April 2024-March 2025



Appendix 2 – HUB activity analysis (3) continued - Chryston Community HUB January 2024-March 2024 and April 2024-March 2025

The data in the graphs attached reflect the comparison in Hub usage at Chryston Community Hub between the periods January 2024 (when Hub usage began to be recorded), until March 2025.

- Since Hub usage was first recorded in January 2024 at Chryston Community Hub, Hub usage figures have been inconsistent e.g. Jan, Feb and July 2024 combined (July being a school holiday period) saw <5 bookings across the whole Hub. Whereas March/April saw 60+ bookings and Sep/Oct 50+ bookings.
- March 2025 has seen the highest booking usage since the Hub opened, with 59 bookings confirmed over the month. This shows an increase compared to March 2024 of 168%.
- The most used 3 spaces within Chryston Community Hub are the Gym Hall, Meeting room 1 and the Conference room (with the meeting rooms and conference rooms shared with NHS colleagues).
- Overall, Hub usage during Jan/Feb/March 2024 consisted of 25 bookings. Over the same 3 months in 2025 this has increase to 118 bookings; an increase over the 2 periods of 372%.
- Since the opening of the Hub, bookings have predominately been made for NLC service delivery purposes, with sport and fitness, support groups and youth work also significant.

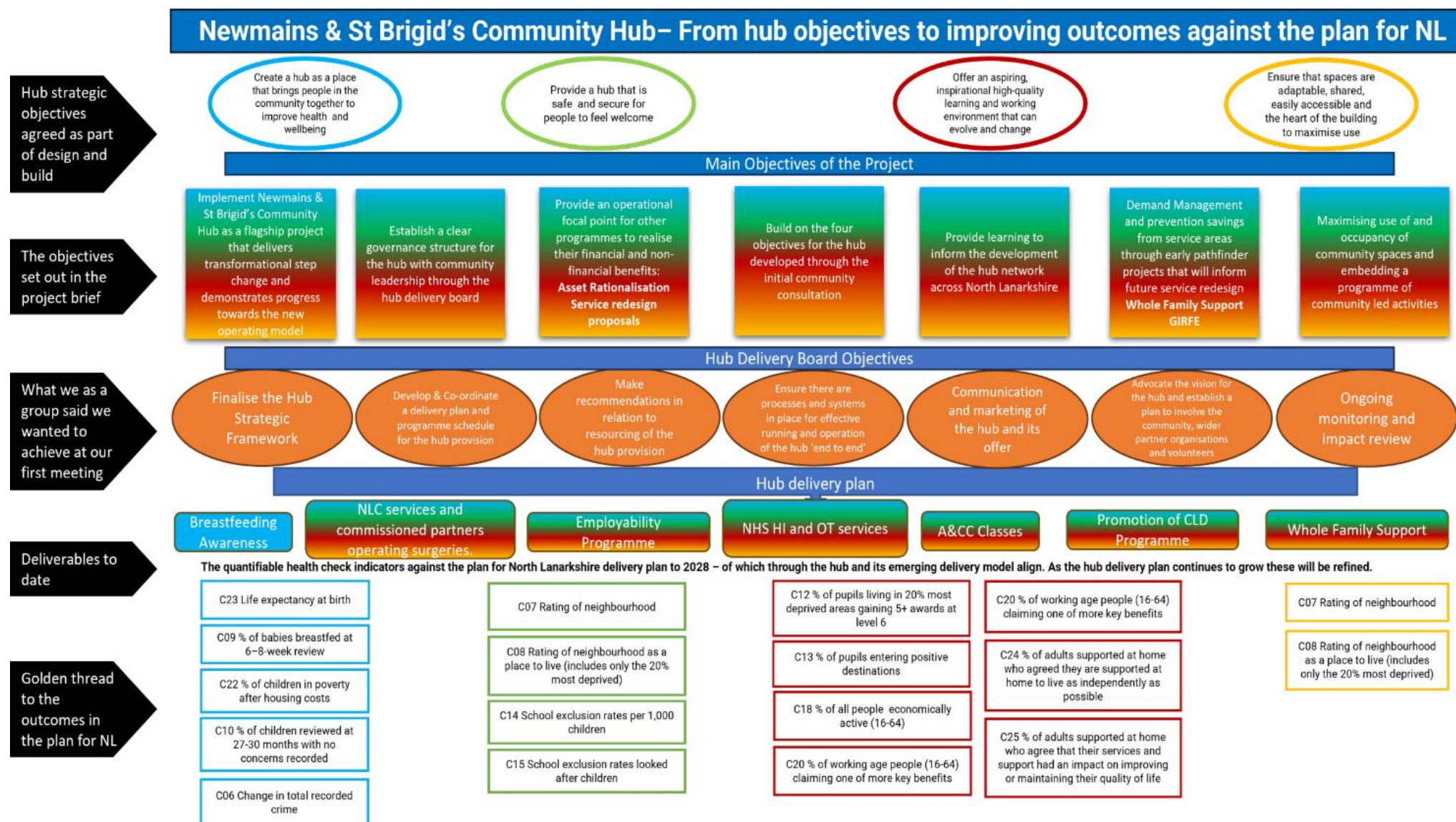
Areas from the analysis identified for growth and opportunity

During the months of July and December 2024, there is a significant drop in Hub bookings. This is due to school holiday periods when there is less footfall in and around the Hub. There have been indications from the Hub Facilities Management (FM) team that this may be due to a variety of factors e.g. FM have until now recruited staff for 'term time' only. School holidays are also when facilities teams try and take much of their annual leave. Now that the Hub Coordinator is in place this can be addressed and a new focus on maximising occupancy of the the spaces when the school population is not using the hub can take place.

- There is potential growth of usage opportunities through improvement of facilities on offer e.g. improved wifi connection, printing availability. There is also work ongoing by the CHC to improve booking processes and in some cases the reconfiguration of rooms to incorporate an improved workstation for users.
- Work is ongoing with various partners and services which will see a positive impact on bookings, through the development of statutory and non-statutory partnerships and activity, Learning & Employability, Youth Work, supporting various aspects of health and wellbeing and addressing health inequalities.

Appendix 3 – Hub delivery plan for Newmains & St Brigid's from objectives to plan for NL outcomes

NOTE: The rainbow effect illustrates where objectives or plans cut across plan for NL health check indicators, each delivery board is developing its own performance outcomes in line with the benefits realisation guidance.



Appendix 4 – HUB timetable showing current usage and planned events/activity @ May 2025

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Newmains & St Brigid's	<p>St Aidan's Cluster Meetings 9am - 10.30am (Meeting Room B)</p> <p>Tackling Poverty Team weekly clinic to support booked appointments 9am - 5pm (Meeting Room A) and 1pm - 5pm (Meeting Room B)</p> <p>NL Carers Together Neurodevelopmental Family Support 11am - 12.30pm (Meeting Room B)</p> <p>School Headteachers 3pm-4pm (Meeting Room B)</p> <p>Phoenix Futures family support weekly clinic pre-booked appointments 12pm - 2pm (Conference Room)</p> <p>Football Groups 6pm - 9pm (3G Pitches - Full)</p>	<p>School Headteachers 9am - 10am (Meeting Room A)</p> <p>NHS OT 'Mental Health Team' 9am-4pm (Meeting Room A +B)</p> <p>NHS Psychological Service for Old People 2pm - 4.30pm (Meeting Room B)</p> <p>Teen Talk counselling services 9am -12pm (Meeting Room A)</p> <p>Families here and now service 11am - 2pm (Meeting Room B)</p> <p>NHS Psychological Services (Veterans support service team weekly team meeting) 2.30pm - 4.30pm (Conference Room)</p> <p>Football Groups 6pm - 9pm (3G Pitches - Full)</p>	<p>School Headteachers 9am - 10am (Meeting Room A)</p> <p>Routes to Work 11am - 4pm (Meeting Room B)</p> <p>NHS Physio Research Project 11am - 2pm (Meeting Room A)</p> <p>CLD Children & Families 12pm - 3.30pm (Conference Room)</p> <p>NHS Integrated Day Service Team Meetings 2pm - 4pm (Conference Room) *School holidays</p> <p>ActiveNL Zumba 7-8pm (Gym Hall)</p> <p>AA Support Group 7pm -10pm (Multi-purpose Room)</p> <p>Football Groups 6pm - 9pm (3G Pitches - Full)</p>	<p>School Headteachers 9am - 10am (Meeting Room A)</p> <p>St Aidan's Cluster Meetings 1:1 meetings 1pm - 3pm (Meeting Room A)</p> <p>Wishaw Housing weekly team meeting 10am - 12pm (Conference Room)</p> <p>Families Here and Now Service 12pm - 2pm (Conference Room)</p> <p>Education & Families Kinship Team 10am - 12.15pm (Meeting Room A)</p> <p>Brannock High Language Therapy 1.20pm - 3.30pm (Meeting Room B)</p> <p>NHS OT Rheumatology Team - Fatigue Management Group 12.30pm - 4pm (Conference Room)</p> <p>NL Disability Forum 9am - 12pm (Meeting Room B)</p> <p>School HT's 3pm-4pm (Meeting Room B)</p> <p>ActiveNL Body Attack 6.15-7.15pm (Gym Hall)</p> <p>ActiveNL Yoga 7.15-8.15pm (Gym Hall)</p> <p>CLD Girls Group 6pm-8pm (Social Area)</p> <p>Football Groups 6pm - 9pm (3G Pitches - Full)</p>	<p>School Headteachers 9am - 10am (Meeting Room A)</p> <p>Phoenix Futures family support weekly clinic 10am - 2pm (Meeting Room A)</p> <p>NL Carers Together weekly clinic 10am - 4pm (Meeting Room B)</p> <p>Families here and now service 2pm - 4pm (Conference Room)</p> <p>Kinship Carers weekly peer-support group 9.30am - 12.30pm (Conference Room)</p> <p>Football Groups 6pm - 9pm (3G Pitches - Full)</p>	<p>Football Pitches 12pm - 3pm (3G Pitches Full)</p> <p>Families here and now service community room (10am to 3pm)</p>	<p>Football Pitches 12pm - 4pm</p>
Riverbank	<p>NL Carers Together 8.30am-5pm (Meeting Room 1)</p> <p>School Headteacher 9am-10am (Meeting Room 2)</p> <p>CLD 12pm-1pm (Conference Room)</p> <p>Solihull Parenting Group 1pm-4pm (Term time - Community Room)</p> <p>C&S Out of Shool Care 3pm-6pm (Social Area/Multipurpose Room)</p> <p>School HT 2.30pm-3.30pm (Meeting Room 2)</p> <p>School HT 4pm-5pm (Community Room)</p> <p>CLD 9am to 12noon (Staff/partnership zone)</p> <p>Bushido Karate 6pm-7pm (Gym Hall)</p> <p>Football Groups 6pm - 9pm (Football Pitches in use except pitch 2 between 8pm-9pm)</p>	<p>School Headteacher 9am-10am (Meeting Room 2)</p> <p>Carers Together ASN parent peer support group 9.30am-11.30am (Community Room)</p> <p>NL Disability Forum 9am-12pm tbc (Meeting Room 1)</p> <p>School HT 2.30pm-3.30pm (Meeting Room 2)</p> <p>C&S Out of Shool Care 3pm-6pm (Social Area/Multipurpose Room)</p> <p>NLC Active Schools 9am to 12noon (Staff/partnership zone)</p> <p>Football Groups 6pm - 9pm (Football Pitches - full usage)</p>	<p>School Headteacher 9am-10am (Meeting Room 2)</p> <p>Tackling Poverty drop ins 9am-5pm (Meeting Room 1)</p> <p>School HT 2.30pm-3.30pm (Meeting Room 2)</p> <p>C&S Out of Shool Care 3pm-6pm (Social Area/Multipurpose Room)</p> <p>Sense of Wonder 6pm-7pm (Community Room)</p> <p>VANL 2pm-5pm (Staff/partnership zone)</p> <p>Football Groups 6pm - 9pm (Football Pitches - full usage)</p> <p>NHS Perinatal Mental Health 'Finding me' Group for new parents with babies up to 1-year old 10am-12noon (Community room from Wed 20th August)</p> <p>NHS psychological services stress management workshops - during Summer Holidays (Community room)</p>	<p>School Headteacher 9am-10am (Meeting Room 2)</p> <p>Tackling Poverty Team 3 in 4 base and booked appts with Routes to Work (Meeting room 2 - 10am to 2pm)</p> <p>Housing tenant participation 10am-2pm (Staff/Partnership zone)</p> <p>School HT 2.30pm-3.30pm (Meeting Room 2)</p> <p>C&S Out of Shool Care 3pm-6pm (Social area/multipurpose room)</p> <p>Football Groups 6pm - 9pm (Football Pitches in use except pitch 2 between 8pm-9pm)</p>	<p>School Headteacher 9am-10am (Meeting Room 2)</p> <p>NLC Cluster work 10am to 2pm (Meeting room 2 & staff/partnership zone)</p> <p>Families here and now service drop in 2pm-4pm (Meeting Room 1) (Staff/partnership zone)</p> <p>School HT 2.30pm-3.30pm (Meeting Room 2)</p> <p>C&S Out of Shool Care 3pm-6pm (Social Area/Multipurpose Room)</p> <p>Football Groups 6pm - 9pm (Football Pitches - full usage)</p> <p>NHS Perinatal Mental Health 'Circle of Security' peer support new parent group 10am-12noon (Community room from 3rd October 2025)</p>	<p>Football Pitches 9am - 3pm (Football Pitches - full usage)</p> <p>Families here and now service community room (10am to 3pm)</p> <p>ASN Stars Football NL (930-230pm Gym Hall)</p> <p>ASN Stars Football NL (930-230pm Gym Hall)</p>	<p>Football Pitches 9am - 3pm (Football Pitches - full usage)</p> <p>ASN Stars Football NL (930-230pm Gym Hall)</p>
Chryston	<p>School Headteacher (meeting room 1, 3pm - 4pm)</p> <p>Teen Talk counselling services (Meeting Room 2, 3-4pm)</p> <p>Chryston Community Council, Conference Room, last monday of every month 6-9pm</p> <p>Sparkles Dance Academy, Gym, 5pm - 7.30pm</p>	<p>Routes to work supported by Tackling Poverty Team (meeting room 2 - 9am-4pm)</p> <p>SAMH well informed mental health drop in from 17th June (meeting room 1 10am-2pm)</p> <p>Advance dance Academy, Gym, 5pm - 9pm</p>	<p>Carers together 930am - 430pm (Meeting Room 1)</p> <p>School Headteacher meeting room 2, 1pm-330pm</p> <p>Facilities management team meeting, Conference room 1pm - 3pm</p> <p>ActiveNL Slim Start weight management class from 11th June 530pm-630pm</p> <p>Community Policy Drop in on 28th May (530-7pm Conference Room)</p>	<p>Bamardo's nurture support (meeting room 1 all day)</p> <p>School Headteacher (meeting room 2 12 noon - 2pm)</p> <p>Cluster work Donna McCann meeting Conference Room, 1pm - 4pm</p> <p>Teen Talk counselling services (Meeting room 2, 330-4.30pm)</p> <p>2nd Clyde Scout Group, gym hall, 5pm - 7pm</p>	<p>Tackling poverty (meeting room 1, 9am-4pm)</p> <p>Cluster work Donna McCann meeting Conference Room, 9am - 12 noon</p> <p>Community Health Walk and social 930-1230</p> <p>Families Here and Now Service (meeting room 2 11am-2pm)</p> <p>NL Disability Forum providing an Improving the Cancer Journey service - meeting room 2 (2pm-4pm)</p> <p>Families Here and Now service (Conference Room 230pm-430pm)</p>	<p>Families here and now service community room (11am to 3pm) monthly</p>	
	<p>Appointments based on a scheduled programme/self referrals for addiction and rehab services, anticoagulant, CAMHS Neuro, child immunisation, midwifery, phlebotomy, physio, podiatry, psychological therapy, speech and language therapy</p> <p>C Card 830am to 445pm</p>	<p>Appointments based on a scheduled programme/self referrals for addiction and rehab services, anticoagulant, CAMHS Neuro, child immunisation, midwifery, phlebotomy, physio, podiatry, psychological therapy, speech and language therapy</p> <p>C Card 830am to 445pm</p> <p>Sexual Health Clinic 1pm-4pm appt only</p> <p>Young people clinic drop in or walk in 4pm-6pm registration 4-5pm</p>	<p>Appointments based on a scheduled programme/self referrals for addiction and rehab services, anticoagulant, CAMHS Neuro, child immunisation, midwifery, phlebotomy, physio, podiatry, psychological therapy, speech and language therapy</p> <p>C Card 830am to 445pm</p>	<p>Appointments based on a scheduled programme/self referrals for addiction and rehab services, anticoagulant, CAMHS Neuro, child immunisation, midwifery, phlebotomy, physio, podiatry, psychological therapy, speech and language therapy</p> <p>C Card 830am to 445pm</p>	<p>Appointments based on a scheduled programme/self referrals for addiction and rehab services, anticoagulant, CAMHS Neuro, child immunisation, midwifery, phlebotomy, physio, podiatry, psychological therapy, speech and language therapy</p> <p>C Card 830am to 415pm</p>		
Colour legend=	Community Organisations ●	Council / Partner ●	NHS services ●				

Appendix 4 continued - HUB timetable showing current usage and planned events/activity

Newmains & St Brigid's	Riverbank	Chryston
Barnardos Saturday 24th May 11am -3pm (Multipurpose Room)	Summer HUB showcase event - August 2025 Organised with Hub Delivery Board	UH&SCP NL Senior Management Team Meeting 6th Aug 2025 1pm - 3pm - Conference Room
Carers Together : Tuesday 8th July Training Day 9am - 5pm (Community Room) Tuesday 2nd September Meeting 9am - 5pm (Community Room) Tuesday 2nd December Dev Day 9am-5pm (Conference Room)	Carers Together : Tuesday 7th October Staff Training 9am - 1pm (Community Room)	Community Police use of meeting rooms periodically to hold community drop-in sessions.
Wishaw & Shotts LOIP Group (Mental Health) Wednesday 23rd July 11.30-1.30pm (Multi-purpose Room)	NHS Smoking Cessation - in planning- DTBC	Tackling poverty Team financial education sessions planned for Conference Space during 2025
NHS Speech & Language Friday 13th of June 9am - 6pm (Community Room)	Housing Locality services - in planning	SAMH drop in mental health support day/booked appointments - starts from 17th June
Supported Employment Training Days (Whole day) 03/07/2025 (Meeting Room A) 10/07/2025 (Multi-purpose Room) 21/07/2025 (Multi-purpose Room)	ACC / CLD / NHS joint working - pre natal classes with exercise classes for families	TARA : Annual Tenants Conference 8am - 6pm (Whole Hub), 14/15th November.
NHS Tobacco Control Team Meetings 9.30am - 12.30pm Conference Room 2nd July 13th August 4th November 17th December	ActiveNL new fitness classes - in planning- DTBC Yoga or body balance HiFit/Body Attack Slimstart weight management	ActiveNL new fitness classes - in planning- DTBC RunClub for 20 people using hub pathways HiFit indoor high energy fitness class Yoga or body balance
Walking Football Festival - In partnership with Chest, Heart & Stroke Scotland Monday 4th of August - 6pm - 9pm (Whole Hub)		Carers Together Monday 17th November, Commitment to Carers Conference, gym hall, 8am - 6pm and 5th Aug and 4th Nov Conference room 8.30am - 1.30pm
NHS Psychological Services - Stress Management Workshops - 6-weeks in August (Multipurpose Room)		
Singing Kettle Halloween special Saturday 18th October 9am - 4pm (Drama box and Main Hall)		

Weekend Valentine's event at Newmains & St Brigid's HUB

Referrals to the FHANS service continue to come in steadily. As Wishaw was our pilot area connected to delivery from the Newmains & St Brigid's Community hub, referrals in Wishaw continue to be the highest. We are currently supporting a lot of families in Newmains, however now have families being supported in areas such as Allanton, Craigneuk and Cambusnethan.

Through conversations with their families, staff identified that parents are feeling isolated in the evenings, however, may be unable to attend physical groups due to their children being in bed. Staff are currently developing a virtual group which will be offered to parents in whole of North Lanarkshire. Parents can join from their devices and the first group will be a "quiz night". Parents will be asked what they would like in the groups; issue based, fun, chat only. These will be running on Thursday evenings so that if parents are looking for further support, they can be signposted to their local hub drop in the following day.

Groups are now being offered at the weekends – staff organised a valentine's group which was well attended. Work is underway with families to build out a weekend offer in line with their needs.



FAMILIES HERE AND NOW SERVICE FAMILY SUPPORT CASE STUDY (March 2025)



Family context

Self referral made by mum to FHANS.
Mum reported child has genetic conditions, autism, learning difficulties and health problems.
Child was extremely isolated, didn't attend school for 3 months, reporting being bullied and poor mental health. Rarely leaving the bedroom, poor hygiene and lack of socialisation.



Benefits of integrated support and responsive delivery in the local community.

Presenting issues

Child's mental health/ wellbeing.
School attendance.

Parental support.
Additional needs of child.
Mum made application for an ASN placement but had incorrectly filled form.

Support provided

Emotional & practical family support.
Communicated with school
Planning for child's wellbeing meeting.
Community FHANS group at Christmas
Community Hub Art group by FHANS
Plan for support at school 2 days weekly

Outcome

Child's wellbeing improved
Child is engaging with family life.
Following a plan for increased school attendance
Positive engagement with peers & active part of community groups.

SYSTEM BENEFITS

Earlier help saved the cost of intensive supports.

Sustainability/ future long-term

- Family resilience building.
- Reduced demand on intensive resources.
- Social integration.

Appendix 6 – Newmains & St Brigid's HUB - Remote Health Monitoring Project (Phase 1) led by UH&SCP



UH&SCP in partnership with Strathclyde University, and digital health solutions company Mari One, have been running a remote health monitoring project from the Hub. The project seeks to inform the provision of pre-frailty interventions. Participants actively involved in the getting it right for everyone (GIRFE) co-design work volunteered to trial wearable devices and take part in weekly drop ins at Newmains & St Brigid's Community Hub.

Mari One provide the bio metric sensing techniques and intelligent software to assist healthcare providers to monitor the health and wellbeing of residents at home and outside in the community as well as patients in hospital have been using the meeting rooms, conference room and the staff zone during this programme. The Hub provided suitable technical support for presenting to and working with participants including Wi-Fi access, smart boards and screens.



"We have really enjoyed working out of the Hub once a week to meet for a Mari-One Health & Well Being clinic. The service and support we have received has been flawless. The residents of North Lanarkshire who are using our technology agree the venue is a great location. Also, the level of cleanliness of facilities, local access within the area including parking and ease of use has provided a private and cohesive environment to participate in the health and well-being programme" Annette MacDougall, CEO, Mari-One

Appendix 7 – Newmains & St Brigid’s HUB - Yoga & Zumba classes

Community based Yoga and Zumba classes have been running since 2024. Provided to bring a local community offering following hub survey feedback by Active and Creative communities. These are well attended and contribute towards improved impacts on community well-being.

To date there has been **764 participants** taking part of Yoga & Zumba with positive participant feedback.

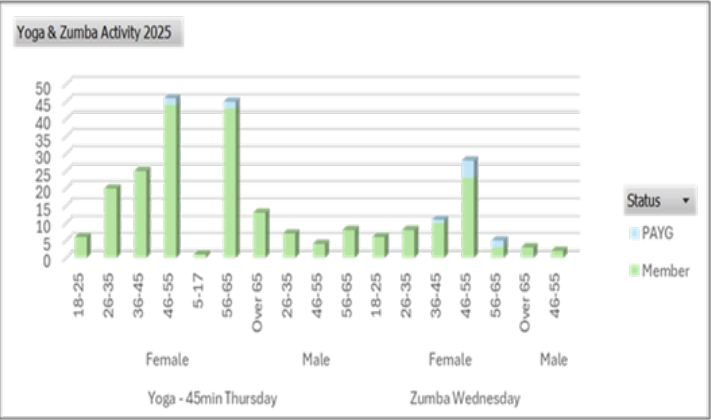
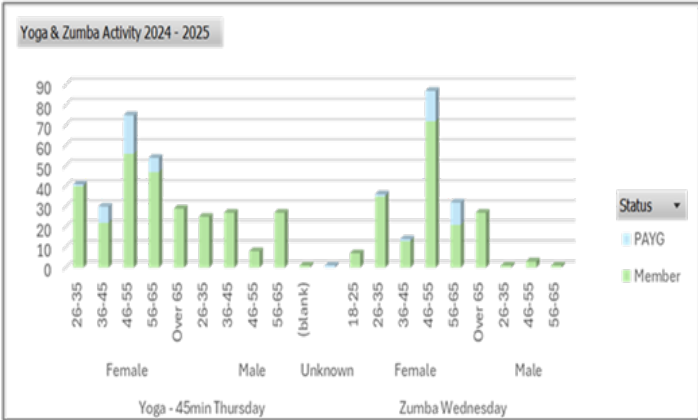
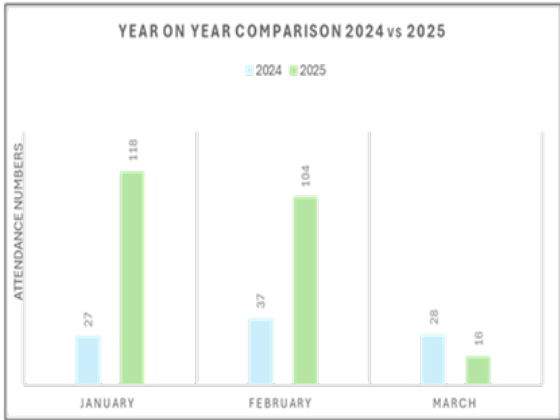
Yoga Class

"My partner and I started attending Kirsty's yoga classes over a year ago and it is the highlight of our week. Kirsty always makes us feel welcome and her guidance gives us the perfect balance of relaxation and strength-building. Her classes allow us to unwind while also helping us feel stronger both physically and mentally. We highly recommend Kirsty's class to anyone. She is an exceptional yoga teacher."

"I'm a big fan of Kirsty's Thursday night yoga classes in Newmains. When I first joined, the class was small and intimate, which made it feel like a close-knit community. It's been amazing to see the class grow and become more popular, but the welcoming and personal vibe has stayed the same. Kirsty's energy and enthusiasm for yoga shine through in every session, making it a highlight of my week. What sets this class apart is its adventurous spirit, there's always some variety - going beyond the routine of sticking only to traditional poses. The atmosphere is easygoing, fun, and always enjoyable. Whether you're a beginner or more experienced, you'll feel encouraged to try new things without any pressure. If you're looking for a yoga class that's both adventurous and relaxing, with a great sense of community, this is the one for you. I'm very grateful to be part of this class!"

Zumba Class

"Zumba is an amazing class, I have met amazing people within this class, the instructor is so motivating ,and the music is awesome."



Appendix 8 – Newmains & St Brigid's and Chryston HUB's - Active Travel projects March 2025

Community organisations have been delivering impactful cycling projects for young people in local hubs, leveraging active travel infrastructure to promote safe cycling.

1) CairneyCycles is based in Newmains and has run an afterschool cycle program, benefiting 60 young people, providing 400 hours of cycling education, repairing 40 bikes, and offering 20 bike loans. This vital service is empowering young people with valuable skills and creating meaningful learning opportunities. More information in impact report: [2024 pilot year in review](#)



2) Getting Better Together Ltd from Shotts partnered with the Newmains & St Brigid's and Chryston hubs during to deliver exciting cycle days at local schools. Over three days, they engaged with a total of 833 young people across all classes and serviced 208 young people's bikes. The sessions offered a mix of basic bike repairs, fun cycling activities, and even a smoothie bike, creating an enjoyable and educational experience for the young people.



Jilly Moffat HT Chryston said: 'We had a truly fantastic response to our Dr Bike event at the Chryston Community Hub on 12th March, with 108 pupils cycling their bikes in on the day, for small repairs.'

William Elder, GBT Strategic Lead and Physical Activity Specialist said 'Over 100 bike brought in by the children, which is a fantastic response, and shows their interest in cycling. The desire for the kids and their parents to have them on their bikes, and the awareness and importance to have them properly maintained. Sometimes all it takes is a puncture or a seat which is too low, for a child to lose interest in cycling. We have supported 100+ children today to keep cycling'.

Appendix 9 – Newmains & St Brigid's HUB – Intergenerational digital skills project, February-March 2025

A partnership Project organised by Newmains Community Trust & Overtown 'Gamechangers' Group, delivered in the community hub. Planned & facilitated by Cara, a University West of Scotland Community Education Student. A 4-week programme of digital skills sharing between P7 pupils from both schools within the hub and older adults.



NEWMAINS COMMUNITY TRUST



"I found it very helpful, and the kids were very knowledgeable" - Jessie

"The knowledge of the kids was amazing, and they could answer everything, their patience was great" - Nancy

"It was fantastic" - Robert

Appendix 10 – Riverbank HUB – Get Walking Health Walks, Bushido Karate Club and HUB user testimonials



Health Walks Get Walking Lanarkshire

Saturdays, 11.00 am

Calderbank, bottom of Woodhall Avenue
(1st, 3rd and 5th Saturday)

Sikeside, Riverbank Hub car park,
Paddock Street (2nd and 4th Saturday)

Please book for your first walk:
getwalkinglanarkshire@northlan.gov.uk/
07903 358424

Free, friendly walks
Every week, just an hour



www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/getwalking





We have had drop-in sessions for parents twice a week (Tuesday & Thursdays) over the last 6 or so weeks. There have also been a few Saturday drop-in events for families we started in December. I have been mainly using the Hub to drop in and undertake some paperwork and generally getting my face known within the hub. It's a great space for my work as most of my families are in the area, so it's good to be close by for easy access. It has also been good to meet up with the other staff from the FHANS partnership i.e. Action for children, Home Start & Impact Arts.

Colin Brown, FHANS March 25'





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It's great to have a space within the local community to go along to and work from to catch up on emails etc. I work with tenants and resident's groups across the North of North Lanarkshire, my work is out in the community meeting with groups at various times across the day and evening. Often there can be a time gap between meetings so having a space locally to work from and to be able to meet people really makes a difference. Looking to the future I think Riverbank Community Hub will provide opportunities to make contact, network and interact with other council staff and colleagues. It will be a good opportunity to network with other organisations, as well as offering a space to meet community reps.

Nancy Robertson, Tenant Participation Officer



Appendix 15 – Examples of the digital information screens, Active travel infrastructure and outdoor gym equipment installed at HUB’s

Digital monolith



Scooter parking



Tool station



Cycle parking and bike shelter



Active travel board install



Outdoor gym equipment



Digital information display screen



North Lanarkshire Council Report

Policy and Strategy Committee

Does this report require to be approved?

☐ Yes ☒ No

Ref LJ/SL

Date 05/06/25

Demonstrating Best Value in Transformation

From Stephen Penman, Chief Officer (Strategy and Engagement)

E-mail PenmanSte@northlan.gov.uk **Telephone** 07725 289 559

Executive Summary

Members of the Policy and Strategy Committee will recall the report in March 2025 which provided an update in progress being made in delivering a wide range of programmes, projects, and activities in respect of the Programme of Work for 2023 to 2028.

The report in March 2025 followed on from many reports to the Policy and Strategy Committee since The Plan for North Lanarkshire was established in 2019 that have demonstrated how the vision - inclusive growth and prosperity for all to bring equal benefits and a fairer distribution of wealth to all North Lanarkshire's people and communities - was being developed and delivered to transform the place that is North Lanarkshire.

The transformation of North Lanarkshire to date has been able to be realised through decisions made by the Policy and Strategy Committee and the council's Committees which have been unwavering in their support to not just deliver the Programme of Work, but to ensure it is delivered with a greater focus on scale and purpose that escalates positive change and transformation in a way that improves the lives of the people and communities of North Lanarkshire.

The duty of Best Value underpins all aspects of council activities and members of the Policy and Strategy Committee are well versed in the duty which requires the council to ensure arrangements are in place to secure *continuous improvement in performance* for all the functions and activities undertaken to deliver services and improve outcomes.

Since implementation of the duty in 2004, all local authorities in Scotland have been subject to ongoing national and local audit processes to ensure they continue to be able to demonstrate Best Value in practice. A new national approach to auditing Best Value came into effect as part of the external auditor five-year appointments from 2022/23 which includes a thematic audit each year; the theme for 2025 is transformation.

While Best Value has a focus on good governance and managing resources effectively, in practice it is about so much more - it's about improving the functions and activities the council undertakes to deliver the best possible outcomes and services that improve the everyday lives of local people. Elected Members therefore also have a central role to play to ensure the council continues to demonstrate Best Value in practice

The 2025 thematic audit is currently underway across the council and, as per the Scheme of Administration, the Policy and Strategy Committee have a clear role in this respect in

terms of overseeing the delivery of the council's transformational and digitisation programmes and projects. As such, this report provides an update in respect of the thematic audit on transformation and the context and evidence put forward by the council to support the audit (set out in Appendix 1).

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Policy and Strategy Committee:

- (1) Are aware of the update to the national approach to auditing Best Value, the theme of transformation for the year three Best Value audit work, and the context and evidence put forward by the council to support the audit (as set out in Appendix 1),
- (2) Continue to endorse their role (in line with the Scheme of Administration) in terms of overseeing the delivery of the council's transformational and digitisation programmes and projects, and
- (3) Continue to support the Programme of Work as the delivery vehicle supporting the transformation of North Lanarkshire.

The Plan for North Lanarkshire

Priority	All priorities
Ambition statement	All ambition statements
Programme of Work	Statutory / corporate / service requirement
Programme of Work	All Programmes of Work

1. Background

- 1.1 The new national approach to auditing Best Value came into effect as part of the external auditor appointments for the five-year term from 2022/23. This approach is twofold and means that:

- Auditing Best Value is integrated within the wider scope of the external auditor's annual audit work which is reported in their Annual Audit Report (AAR). This includes risk-based and follow up audit work on Best Value related recommendations from previous audit reports as well as reflecting on council reporting against priorities and in terms of the use of the Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF).
- Thematic Best Value audit work is undertaken each year by the external auditor as per the Accounts Commission's requirements to provide assurance on areas of risk / interest across councils as at a defined point in time, thus enabling comparisons across Scotland. This means that each year the council undergoes an assessment of particular aspects of Best Value in order to provide the Accounts Commission with the relevant assurances in terms of performance and the quality of services to the public.

- 1.2 Since the new approach was implemented, Elected Members have been able to view the various outcome reports (listed below) through the Policy and Strategy Committee and/or the Audit and Scrutiny Panel:

Annual Audit Report (AAR)

- 2022/23 - [link to report](#) to Audit and Scrutiny Panel in October 2023.
- 2023/24 - [link to report](#) to Audit and Scrutiny Panel in October 2024.

Thematic report

- The council's 2022/23 outcome report on the theme in respect of the *leadership of the development of new strategic priorities* was presented to the Audit and Scrutiny Panel in October 2023 and the Policy and Strategy Committee in December 2023.
- The council's 2023/24 outcome report on the theme for *workforce innovation (specifically how the council is responding to current workforce challenges through building capacity, increasing productivity, and innovation)* was presented to the Audit and Scrutiny Panel in August 2024 and the Policy and Strategy Committee in September 2024.

- 1.3 With the national thematic Best Value priorities changing each year, this report provides an update for Policy and Strategy Committee on year three thematic Best Value audit work for 2025 and, as the thematic audit is currently underway across the council, this report provides the Policy and Strategy Committee with an update in respect of the thematic audit on transformation and the context and evidence put forward by the council to support the audit (set out in Appendix 1).

2. Best Value audit approach in councils

The duty of Best Value

- 2.1 The requirements for external auditors in all areas of their audit work, including Best Value, are set out in the Code of Audit Practice 2021. This is issued by Audit Scotland to define auditors' objectives and responsibilities, and it is a condition of each auditors' appointment that they follow the Code. Supplementary guidance is also provided to assist external auditors in meeting the Best Value requirements of the Code; this promotes a consistent approach to the audit work across all 32 councils.
- 2.2 Having been in place since 2004, the national Best Value guidance was updated in 2020 to better reflect the environment in which councils deliver services with an increasing emphasis on citizens and personalised services, a focus on outcomes, and the need for innovation in designing public services for the future. The 2020 guidance frames Best Value around seven areas and councils are required to demonstrate a focus on continuous improvement in performance around each of these areas:
1. Vision and leadership.
 2. Governance and accountability.
 3. Effective use of resources.
 4. Partnerships and collaborative working.
 5. Working with communities.
 6. Sustainability.
 7. Fairness and equality.

Sustainability, and fairness and equality, continue to be cross-cutting areas that should be integral to all of the functions and activities carried out by a council to deliver good outcomes and achieve Best Value.

Annual Audit Reports (AARs)

- 2.3 The approach to auditing Best Value includes a regular review of Annual Audit Reports (AARs) by the Accounts Commission.
- Annual Audit Reports (AARs) for each council are reviewed by the Accounts Commission (under the cover of the statutory Controller of Audit report which is

produced under Section 102 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973) at least once over the five-year appointment to provide the Commission with assurance on Best Value in each individual council.

- The programme of Controller of Audit reports will cover all 32 councils over the period from October 2023 to August 2027; eight councils are due to be reported each year.
- The national timetable is as noted in the table underneath; North Lanarkshire Council will undergo the Controller of Audit process and report to the Accounts Commission between October 2025 and August 2026. Controller of Audit reports scheduled over this period are subject to change, however, should another council's risk profile change significantly.

Council reports published to date	Reports due to be published by August 2025	Reports due to be published October 2025 to August 2026
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South Ayrshire • Dundee City • Dumfries and Galloway • Orkney Islands • Moray • Falkirk • Clackmannanshire • City of Edinburgh • Scottish Borders • East Renfrewshire • Argyll and Bute • Fife • Highland 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Renfrewshire • Western Isles • East Lothian 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Ayrshire • Aberdeenshire • North Lanarkshire • Shetland Islands • Glasgow City • Stirling • Inverclyde • Angus <p>Publication dates for remaining the 8 councils to be confirmed.</p>

- Controller of Audit reports will cover each council's latest Annual Audit Report (AAR) and be a summary of the information and judgements reported. The Accounts Commission will consider the report and may report findings publicly or request a hearing (in extreme circumstances).
- External auditors will undergo a clearance process with each council for the Controller of Audit reports. Thereafter these reports will be expected to be submitted to the relevant committee for Elected Member's discussion and oversight.

National outcomes from the annual thematic Best Value audit work

Year one - 2022/23

2.4 Following the conclusion of the thematic Best Value audit work for 2022/23, which focused on the *leadership of the development of new strategic priorities*, a national report ([link](#)) was published in July 2024 with key findings which included the following:

- The leadership in all councils have established a clear vision supported by revised priorities informed by the views of citizens and communities.
- Most councils have set out what they want to achieve in their priority areas, but improvements are needed in performance monitoring and reporting.
- Councils need to do more to ensure budget decisions and financial strategies are aligned to priorities. Councils have a variety of strategic plans focused on workforce, digital, assets, and service plans but the extent to which these have been updated to reflect new priorities is varied.
- Members and officers are working collaboratively, but maintaining and strengthening these relationships and ensuring strong governance and scrutiny is key to ensuring tough decisions are made effectively.
- Community empowerment is a local priority for most councils.

It should be noted that none of the issues noted in paragraph 2.4 above were identified as an area for improvement within the North Lanarkshire Council thematic Best Value report for 2022/23. The report for the council in this respect identified three areas for improvement which have been implemented and signed off by the external auditors, these focussed on strategic planning feedback, community engagement, and elected members training and development.

Year two - 2023/24

2.5 Following the conclusion of the thematic Best Value audit work for 2023/24, which focused on *workforce innovation*, a snapshot of key findings from Audit Scotland's review of thematic reports for all 32 councils in Scotland is shown below. The corresponding national report is scheduled to be published in early autumn 2025.

- Councils take a structured and comprehensive approach to workforce planning at service level, but the corporate-level approach requires strengthening. Councils recognise that the need to make workforce planning more strategic.
- Workforce strategies are clearly aligned to strategic priorities. Councils engaged effectively with Heads of Service and Trade Unions when developing their Workforce Strategy.
- Councils have a workforce plan to support the delivery of its strategic objectives, but this needs to align with service plans and digital strategy.
- Work is underway to capture the skills and development needs of the workforce and work to identify skills gaps is at an early stage.
- Councils need to develop comprehensive workforce planning across their services. Plans should be underpinned by better data to support decision making and measure impact.

Source: Audit Scotland at an Improvement Service learning event, December 2024

It should be noted that none of the issues noted in paragraph 2.5 above were identified as an area for improvement within the North Lanarkshire Council thematic Best Value report for 2023/24. The report for the council in this respect identified three areas for improvement which are being progressed during 2025/26, these focussed on acting on staff feedback, flexible and hybrid working policies, and data in respect of the temporary workforce.

Year three - 2024/25

2.6 The thematic Best Value audit work for 2025 will see a focus on *Transformation - how councils are redesigning and delivering more efficient services to achieve planned outcomes* across all 32 councils in Scotland. In considering this matter, external auditors will focus on the following questions:

- a) To what extent does the council have clear plans for transformation that link to its priorities and support long-term financial sustainability?
- b) To what extent do the council's programme management arrangements facilitate effective oversight of its transformation plans?
- c) To what extent are communities and partners involved in the development and delivery of the council's plans for transformation?
- d) To what extent has the council considered the impact of its transformation activity, including on vulnerable or protected groups?

- 2.7 In providing added context in respect of the year three thematic audit, the external auditors have also highlighted that self-evaluation and evidence should always remain key to a council being able to demonstrate Best Value.
- 2.8 To support the provision of evidence the auditors have specifically requested information in respect of the undernoted areas of interest. The council's evidence in this respect has been captured in a context document which is set out in Appendix 1 to this report. The content of the context document in these areas of interest is structured around the four questions listed in paragraph 2.6 above. This includes a wide range of corporate and governance information, as well as programme of work specific information which has been provided by Chief Officers in their role as Senior Responsible Officers (SROs) for the Programme of Work priorities (i.e. Transforming Places, Invest in North Lanarkshire, Sustainable Futures, Resilient People, Brighter Futures, Digital North Lanarkshire, and One Service).

Area of interest	Documents
Plans for transformation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strategic transformation plan (where this exists). 2. Individual transformation project plans (sample of three). 3. Council plan. 4. Financial plans.
Transformation programme management	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Minutes and progress reports to the senior leadership team for the last year. 6. Minutes and progress reports to elected members for the last year.
Community and partner involvement in transformation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Evidence of partner involvement in the development and delivery of transformation projects. 8. Evidence of joint funding arrangements between the council and partners on transformation projects. 9. Evidence of community involvement in the development and delivery of transformation projects.
Impact of transformation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10. Equality impact assessments (sample of three). 11. Impact reports (sample of three). 12. Public performance reports supporting transformation plans.

Next steps

- 2.9 The Annual Audit Report (AAR) for 2024/25, and outcome report arising from the thematic Best Value audit work to be undertaken during 2025, are expected to be reported to the Audit and Scrutiny Panel in the autumn of 2025, and the Policy and Strategy Committee thereafter.
- 2.10 Details of the national audit work programme each year (including both completed and still to be published work) are contained within the Audit Scotland website: <https://audit.scot/what-we-do/our-work-programme>. As a dynamic work programme, this information is kept under review and updated every three months to ensure it responds to changing circumstances.
- 2.11 National developments in terms of the approach to auditing Best Value, as well as key findings arising from other councils' audits, continue to be kept under review as the process evolves to ensure the council remains aware of developments across Scotland.

3. Measures of success

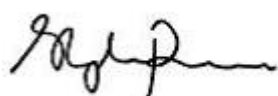
- 3.1 Measures of success include:

- Regular oversight and monitoring of performance across the organisation to gain assurances in terms of governance and accountability.
- Regular review and challenge processes to scrutinise the performance of the council to ensure effective use of resources and that resources are directed in accordance with agreed policy and according to priorities, while ensuring sound decision making and clear accountability for the use of resources in achieving improved outcomes for service users and the local community.
- Performance monitoring, management, and reporting arrangements that support the demonstration of improved performance in local services and outcomes, and the delivery of Best Value.

4. Supporting documentation

4.1 Best Value work reported in Annual Audit Reports (AARs) and local management reports have been collated across Scotland into national thematic and overview reports. The links to these reports are available below for the supplementary information of Audit and Scrutiny Panel members.

- [Transformation in councils - sector led change and collaboration to achieve financial sustainability](#) - October 2024. This aims to set the scene in advance of the year three thematic Best Value audit work.
- [Delivering for the future - why leadership matters](#) (national output report following year one Best Value thematic audit) - July 2024.
- [How the Accounts Commission holds local government to account](#) - blog January 2024.
- [20 years of Best Value Auditing in Scotland](#) - September 2023.



Stephen Penman
Chief Officer (Strategy and Engagement)

5. Impacts

5.1	Public Sector Equality Duty and Fairer Scotland Duty Does the report contain information that has an impact as a result of the Public Sector Equality Duty and/or Fairer Scotland Duty? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact? If Yes, has an assessment been carried out and published on the council's website? https://www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/your-community/equalities/equality-and-fairer-scotland-duty-impact-assessments Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
5.2	Financial impact Does the report contain any financial impacts? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If Yes, have all relevant financial impacts been discussed and agreed with Finance? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?

5.3	HR policy impact Does the report contain any HR policy or procedure impacts? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If Yes, have all relevant HR impacts been discussed and agreed with People Resources? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?
5.4	Legal impact Does the report contain any legal impacts (such as general legal matters, statutory considerations (including employment law considerations), or new legislation)? Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If Yes, have all relevant legal impacts been discussed and agreed with Legal and Democratic? Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact? The Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 introduced the duty of Best Value; this requires that councils " <i>make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in performance</i> ". The Local Government Act 1992 established the role of the Statutory Direction to direct councils in terms of the " <i>publication of information as to standards of performance</i> ".
5.5	Data protection impact Does the report / project / practice contain or involve the processing of personal data? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If Yes, is the processing of this personal data likely to result in a high risk to the data subject? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If Yes, has a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) been carried out and e-mailed to dataprotection@northlan.gov.uk Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
5.6	Technology / Digital impact Does the report contain information that has an impact on either technology, digital transformation, service redesign / business change processes, data management, or connectivity / broadband / Wi-Fi? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact? Where the impact identifies a requirement for significant technology change, has an assessment been carried out (or is scheduled to be carried out) by the Enterprise Architecture Governance Group (EAGG)? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
5.7	Environmental / Carbon impact Does the report / project / practice contain information that has an impact on any environmental or carbon matters? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?
5.8	Communications impact Does the report contain any information that has an impact on the council's communications activities? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?
5.9	Risk impact Is there a risk impact?

	<p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the key risks and potential impacts, highlighting where the risk(s) are assessed and recorded (e.g. Corporate or Service or Project Risk Registers), and how they are managed?</p> <p>Ensuring that members of the Policy and Strategy Committee and Audit and Scrutiny Panel are aware of their role, and how this supports the council to demonstrate Best Value, contributes to the mitigation of the risk on the Corporate Risk Register for <i>governance, leadership, and decision making</i>.</p>
<p>5.10</p>	<p>Armed Forces Covenant Duty</p> <p>Does the report require to take due regard of the Armed Forces Covenant Duty (i.e. does it relate to healthcare, housing, or education services for in-Service or ex-Service personnel, or their families, or widow(er)s)?</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the provision which has been made to ensure there has been appropriate consideration of the particular needs of the Armed Forces community to make sure that they do not face disadvantage compared to other citizens in the provision of public services.</p>
<p>5.11</p>	<p>Children's rights and wellbeing impact</p> <p>Does the report contain any information regarding any council activity, service delivery, policy, or plan that has an impact on children and young people up to the age of 18, or on a specific group of these?</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact and the provision that has been made to ensure there has been appropriate consideration of the relevant Articles from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). If Yes, has a Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment (CRWIA) been carried out?</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p>

Appendix 1

Demonstrating Best Value in Transformation - the North Lanarkshire context

May 2025

A. To what extent does the council have clear plans for transformation that link to its priorities and support long-term financial sustainability?

1. [The Plan for North Lanarkshire](#) was established in 2019 with a very clear vision - inclusive growth and prosperity for all - to bring equal benefits and a fairer distribution of wealth to all North Lanarkshire's people and communities.
 - Founded on a place-based ambition, The Plan for North Lanarkshire has at its core an ambition to transform the physical environment of North Lanarkshire in a way that recognises the intrinsic value - and economic, social, and health benefits - gained in doing so.
 - This ambition recognises that implementing a place-based approach originates from the need to address spatial concentrations of disadvantage which, in recent years, have become further exacerbated by a growing complexity of problems being presented in terms of economical, health, and social issues. As such, a place-based approach aims to target an entire community and tackle issues that exist at the neighbourhood level (such as employment, education, skills, economic stability, housing, and health), and address fragmented service provision that leads to gaps or duplication of effort.
 - Investing in a place-based approach and focusing on the physical environment of local communities, and on better integrated and more accessible service systems therein, underpins the holistic approach (that crosses public sectors and service silos) being delivered through the Programme of Work. This approach aims to make The Plan for North Lanarkshire real for people, and North Lanarkshire a place which individuals can identify with - a place to live, learn, work, invest, and visit.
2. Prior to The Plan for North Lanarkshire being formally established in 2019, the shared ambition for inclusive growth and prosperity was set out in a report approved at committee in September 2018 ([link](#)). This shared ambition was based on evidence through an original dataset which later evolved into the 28 health check indicators. This report outlined the future direction for North Lanarkshire to be a place where everyone is given equality of opportunity and where individuals are supported, encouraged, and cared for at each key stage of their life. The Plan for North Lanarkshire is deliberately one plan for one place as all partners from the North Lanarkshire Community Planning Partnership endorsed this approach from the outset and signed up to the shared ambition therein for the North Lanarkshire area.
3. The 2018 report also outlined plans to develop a Community Investment Fund to realise new resources for direct investment to deliver on the shared ambition. These resources would be over and above that already approved to fund existing capital programmes and are critical to the successful delivery of place-based ambition of The Plan for North Lanarkshire. As such, this project is one of the case studies submitted to the Best Value auditors as it demonstrates the fundamental role the Community Investment Fund has played from the outset in enabling the vision in The Plan for North Lanarkshire to become a reality in the transformation of North Lanarkshire (and it aligns to the Accounts Commission transformation principles of vision, planning, governance, collaboration, and innovation). This case study is available to view in the Audit Scotland / NLC shared evidence platform within the case study folder.
 - Since the initial plans in 2018, the Community Investment Fund has remained under review to ensure the underpinning assumptions used in determining the potential funding available remain up to date. The reports in the links below also show the ongoing commitment to securing the financial resources and maintaining the long-term financial sustainability required to deliver on The Plan for North Lanarkshire vision. It also shows the continued alignment to delivering the Strategic Capital Investment Programme priorities, with the reports in September 2023 and December 2024 also demonstrating the extent of place-based and service focussed transformational programme delivery highlights to date.

- December 2024 - [link](#) (report shows the date as 05/12/23; but this link is the actual 05/12/24 report).
 - September 2023 - [link](#).
 - September 2022 - [link](#).
 - December 2021 - [link](#).
 - March 2020 - [link](#), December 2020 - [link](#).
4. Approved in March 2024, the council's updated Capital Strategy 2024/25 to 2028/29 ([link to strategy](#)) provides the framework to ensure the council creates an asset base that meets the shared ambition for North Lanarkshire to be the place to live, learn, work, invest, and visit. This musters combined resources and delivers change in a way that recognises the need for partnership and co-operation to address challenges through integrated solutions that will make a difference to the lives of people who live in North Lanarkshire's communities. The Capital Strategy supports the development of capital investment proposals up to 2028/29 based on available resources aligned to The Plan for North Lanarkshire, Best Value, the Financial Regulations ([link](#)), the Corporate Asset Management Plan ([link](#)), and the Medium-Term Financial Plan ([link](#)) established within the overarching Financial Strategy ([link](#)).
 5. Longer-term financial planning is integral to the council's Financial Strategy and to the strategic approach to budgeting. Effective decision making relies on robust financial planning and the Medium-Term Financial Plan assists in ensuring resources are aligned to the key priorities outlined in The Plan for North Lanarkshire and are affordable and sustainable. The Medium-Term Financial Plan 2025/26 to 2029/30 (approved in June 2024 - [link](#)) reflects the financial risks that may impact on the council's ability to continue to provide high quality services focussing on the strategic priorities, while balancing the budget. Therefore, this plan continues to consider a range of scenarios and highlights the associated forecast budget position in order to support the council's approach to maintaining financial sustainability in the delivery of the Programme of Work and associated services. An update to the Medium-Term Financial Plan for 2026/27 to 2030/31 is scheduled to be presented to the Policy and Strategy Committee in June 2025.
 6. Capital investment proposals up to 2028/29 are set out in the Strategic Capital Investment Programme for 2024/25 to 2028/29 (approved at committee in March 2024 - [link](#)). An annual update to the programme was considered by committee in March 2025 ([link](#)); this highlights record levels of capital investment of £856 million over the five-year period as the council continues the delivery of its long-term place shaping transformation of North Lanarkshire's towns and communities. Alongside record levels of investment in the council's housing provision through the Housing Revenue Account, this represents potential investment of £1.685 billion in North Lanarkshire's towns and communities. Key highlights in the proposed investment programme include:
 - £347 million to continue investment in the Town and Community Hub programme and funding to complete projects in Abronhill, Glenboig, and Ravenscraig.
 - £41 million of additional targeted investment the council's school, culture, and leisure estate which will include a strategic review of the council's pool estate.
 - City Deal investment of £95 million, including resources to progress the East Airdrie Link Road project.
 - £45 million investment in the council's Economic Regeneration Delivery Plan to support the ongoing transformation of North Lanarkshire's town centres, including ongoing work to transform Cumbernauld town centre.
 - £37 million key infrastructure investment in bridges, flooding, active travel, and road safety.
 - £18 million investment in the Parks Masterplan, including funding to enable the redevelopment of Strathclyde Park Watersports Centre.
 - £23 million investment in business and digital systems as the council continues its digital offering.
 - £13 million investment in Community Boards with a key aim of evolving the council's approach to facilitating community asset transfers.
 7. With its focus on improving the council's housing stock, providing safe and sustainable domestic properties for local tenants, and contributing to local place-based regeneration, the Housing Capital Programme also plays a key role in supporting delivery of The Plan for North Lanarkshire vision. Reports in this respect were approved at committee in February 2025 ([link](#)) and May 2025 ([link](#)). Monitoring of the HRA Capital Programme is carried out through regular reports to the Housing Committee.

8. Delivery of the Strategic Capital Investment Programme is monitored through reports to committee each cycle, with the latest being considered by Finance and Resources in May 2025 ([link](#)). A regular exceptions report is also considered by the Business Management Team which supports senior management oversight and scrutiny of capital projects with a budget over £0.100m that have a red delivery status. The latest version of this exceptions report is available to view in the Audit Scotland / NLC shared evidence platform within the financial plans folder.
9. The Strategic Capital Investment Programme report in March 2025 also includes an update to the Strategic Capital Delivery Group (SCDG) terms of reference ([link](#)) to reflect changes to the council's senior management team structure as outlined in the report to committee in September 2024 ([link](#)), as well as an update to the group's objectives to reflect the revised process for monitoring capital programme delivery and financial management of the capital programme, an update to the membership of the group to reflect senior management team changes and to confirm the roles of subject matter experts on the group, and to provide clarity of the new emerging priorities protocol agreed by the SCDG to manage unfunded burdens.
10. The Programme of Work is the delivery vehicle that is making The Plan for North Lanarkshire real. Since its implementation in 2019, the Programme of Work has been instrumental in stabilising the strategic direction of the council (including work in partnership) in the face of a fast paced, rapidly changing, and relentlessly uncertain future local government environment, while allowing for appropriate flexibility in the operational delivery of many complex inter-connected programmes, projects, activities, and plans to ensure a dedicated focus on transformational change that improves the lives of local people.
 - The latest Programme of Work to 2028 (approved in March 2023 - link to [report](#) and [glossy](#)) was a change in approach to previous years in that it was reframed within the latest North Lanarkshire context provided by the 28 health check indicators and provided a consistent platform for delivery covering five years. This new approach was critical to ensure an even greater focus on escalating the pace and depth of change that is essential to ensure a heightened and more strategic focus on not only sustaining the economic and community aspects that will enable local people and communities (and the place that is North Lanarkshire) to thrive, but also on ensuring a more targeted approach to improving social conditions, outcomes, and people's lives.
 - The Programme of Work to 2028 comprises seven priorities for delivery. The five front facing priorities - Transforming Places, Invest in North Lanarkshire, Sustainable Futures, Resilient People, and Brighter Futures - are supported by priorities which are key to enabling delivery:
 - Digital North Lanarkshire - to develop a skilled digital workforce, promote an innovative, sustainable culture, and be the digital leader for a transformed North Lanarkshire. This programme is a key enabler in delivering the other programme of work priorities and driving economic growth as well as transforming the education and abilities of learners of all ages.
 - One Service - to ensure services are delivered, regardless of owner, in a streamlined, efficient, and supportive model. This programme is a key enabler in delivering the other programme of work priorities and ensuring the council delivers services (regardless of structures or the alignment of functions) in line with the overall vision of inclusive growth and prosperity for all.
 - Delivery of the Programme of Work is monitored through a single integrated council wide Delivery Plan (for which reports were considered at committee in September 2023 - [link](#) and March 2024 - [link](#)). These reports also set out the governance arrangements supporting the Programme of Work and its Delivery Plan.
 - Subsequent six monthly updates have been reported to committee in terms of delivering the priorities in the Programme of Work and its Delivery Plan. This also provides a summary of key highlights achieved and reiterates the consistency and importance of a one place one plan one council approach in delivering the vision of The Plan for North Lanarkshire through the Programme of Work to support the long-term place shaping transformation of North Lanarkshire's towns and communities.
 - September 2024 - [link](#).
 - March 2025 - [link](#).

11. A suite of reports to Policy and Strategy Committee in cycle 1 each year reflects on Programme of Work achievements to date, along with the latest performance results through the 28 health check indicators and plans for the year ahead. This enables the Policy and Strategy Committee to maintain their strategic oversight role of the overall Programme of Work to 2028 in relation to *“development, co-ordination, and monitoring of The Plan for North Lanarkshire”* and to keep under review such *“programmes as the Committee considers necessary to achieve the council’s long-term aims and objectives”* (in line with the scheme of administration). Links to the March 2025 suite of reports are below:
 - Delivering the Programme of Work to 2028 - key achievements - March 2025 ([link](#)).
 - The latest North Lanarkshire context, challenges, and next steps - March 2025 ([link](#)).
12. As noted in the reports referenced in paragraph 10 above, the suite of health check indicators continue to play an important role in informing delivery of the Programme of Work to 2028 to ensure that the stubborn scale of deprivation in areas that are hardest to reach is targeted through policy developments that are focused on tackling unstable trends and improving social conditions. This is a critical aspect to assessing impact and ensuring the success of the place-based ambition of The Plan for North Lanarkshire, as both place-based regeneration and person-based policies need to cross policy sectors and be developed and implemented in tandem - as well as integrated with wider investment and poverty reduction strategies - if transformational change is to truly make a difference. As such, a mid-term review of the five-year Programme of Work is underway that is informed by the latest results for the 28 health check indicators as well as supplementary evidence and context. A broad overview of this review is set out in the March 2025 report ([link](#)).
13. The Programme of Work is also supported by a reporting schedule which provides an indicative timescale of when reports on specific Delivery Plan items are scheduled to be reported to relevant stakeholders, including council committees. A summary of all reports (as at cycle 1 of 2025) is available to view in the Audit Scotland / NLC shared evidence platform within the governance folder. Three examples of specific programmes and/or projects in respect of plans linked to transformation and the council’s priorities are noted below:
 - The Strategic Asset Review and Investment Strategy (SARIS) was established in December 2023 ([link](#)) to create greater integration of the wider community within the assets in the Hub programme (including due consideration of the increasing older adult population), to adapt existing facilities to make them more accessible and usable to the wider communities, and to invest and rationalise the learning and wider estate to make it more efficient and thus sustainable. An update report in September 2024 ([link](#)) highlighted the progress that has been made and the opportunities available in relation to the school and wider asset portfolio. It also acknowledged that the current challenges necessitate a more blended approach to the strategy linked to the school and wider estate - to maintain the momentum and to ensure the offering within the highest priority communities is influenced and adapted as quickly as possible. Update reports in respect of delivering the corresponding Town and Community Hub Programme are submitted to committee on a six monthly basis. The latest report (February 2025 - [link](#)) also includes appendices in respect of the project plan and community benefits.
 - The Economic Regeneration Delivery Plan (ERDP) is the council’s high-level economic development framework which is aligned to the composite capital programme and delivers on the first priority of The Plan for North Lanarkshire - improving economic outcomes and opportunities for all ([link](#) to latest ERDP for 2023 to 2028). Since its inception in 2019, an ERDP Action Plan has been developed annually, detailing the key milestones and targets the council and partners will take forward over the coming year to achieve the priorities set out across the ERDPs four key interrelated themes. The action plan for 2025/26 was approved at committee in February 2025 ([link](#)). The governance arrangements for the ERDP are supported by an annual performance report, the latest of which was reported to committee in August 2024 ([link](#)).
 - As reported to committee in February 2025 ([link](#)), the initial proposals approved were to increase the new supply programme by delivering 5,000 homes by 2035. This was strategically linked to the re-provisioning of all tower blocks (4,600 flats) over 20 years. It was estimated that around 2,300 new homes (50%) would be built on the sites of the tower blocks following their demolition. The target also included an assumption that the council would purchase homes through the Empty Homes / Open Market Purchase Scheme which was expanded further in 2023 to include private landlord properties with the aim of protecting vulnerable

tenants at risk of homelessness.

- In November 2024, an update was provided to committee ([link](#)) which outlined that the new supply programme had achieved 46% towards its overall target of 5,000 homes by 2035 and approved targets for delivery of the programme up to 2035. The programme has continued to deliver homes in the intervening period and to date, 1,581 new build homes have been completed, including a record 335 homes in 2023/24, the second highest number of social rented completions in Scotland. This update also provided a breakdown of the delivery mechanisms utilised to achieve these figures such as traditional new build, off the shelf acquisitions, and properties purchased via the Open Market Purchase Scheme, which has facilitated the acquisition of 812 properties to date.
- A report to committee in February 2025 ([link](#)) provided an update on a review carried out to identify opportunities for potential expansion of the new supply programme and to explore alternative tenure options to support economic and population growth. Through this report it was approved to increase the new supply target to 6,000 homes by 2035, while noting the financial implications of increasing the programme and the dependency on continued Scottish Government grant funding.
- A copy of the programme plan for the new supply programme is available to view in the Audit Scotland / NLC shared evidence platform within the programme of work (specific programmes) folder.

B. To what extent do the council's programme management arrangements facilitate effective oversight of its transformation plans?

14. Delivery of the Programme of Work has to date been supported by an annual review of the council's operating framework that focusses on the incremental structural refinements required to ensure ongoing alignment of vision, plan, governance, and operations in the place-based transformation of North Lanarkshire. The latest report in this respect ([link](#)) was approved in September 2024 - this reiterated the importance of the programme of linked reviews (reported to committee in December 2022 and December 2023) that have been critical to maintaining and safeguarding the sustainability of the organisation's capacity to secure the resources needed to deliver on the vision. These reviews have specifically focused on further supporting the delivery of place-based transformation (i.e. environmental assets, council assets and properties, community operations, and associated services and functions) as well as incremental structural refinements and the resultant impacts across Chief Officer portfolios. Policy and Strategy Committee approvals of the reports in December 2022 ([link](#)) and December 2023 ([link](#)) have supported the approach to build the organisation's capacity by ensuring already challenged resources are maximised through the creation of single council operations, single Chief Officer portfolios, and single service accountability which have underpinned the structural refinements to date. Changes to Chief Officer portfolios have also been instrumental in more effectively supporting delivery of the Programme of Work and driving forward the synergies and changes required to realise the successes achieved to date. This followed structural changes in 2020 to strengthen the focus on communities and ensure the structure of the council's senior management team fully reflected the model established through the nine Community Boards, with Chief Officers being assigned as Community Co-ordinators to each Board.
- The wider structural report in September 2024 was subsequently supported by a strategic workforce report in December 2024 ([link](#)) presented within the context of what The Plan for North Lanarkshire aims to achieve. This report recognises the key workforce and wider labour market challenges facing both the council and North Lanarkshire (and the impact that one has on the other), and the associated risks and areas of work that are required to address current and future workforce gaps and priorities - not for the council or North Lanarkshire alone, but through a wider unified approach. This report also provides a progress update on the One Workforce Plan and strategic workforce priorities to 2028.
 - In line with their terms of reference to ensure services are delivered in a streamlined, efficient, and supportive model, the One Service programme of work is a key enabler in delivering the other programme of work priorities and ensuring the council delivers supports and services (regardless of structures or the alignment of functions) in line with the overall vision of inclusive growth and prosperity for all. In delivering this priority, the One Service Programme of Work Strategic Board has an overarching focus on the delivery of the council's transformational activities through the Programme of Work to ensure a one place, one plan, one council

approach in terms of resources (finances / staffing / technology / assets), capabilities, and capacity. As such, work is currently underway to review and update each service's strategic workforce plans (previously updated in 2024) to ensure an approach to workforce / resource planning that is sustainable and further supports the scenario planning / forecasting work previously carried out in 2023 in respect of future planning and the development of the Leadership and Operating Model for the Community Hubs.

15. As noted in paragraph 10 above, delivery of the Programme of Work is monitored through a single integrated council wide Delivery Plan (for which reports were considered at committee in September 2023 - [link](#) and March 2024 - [link](#)). These reports also set out a summary of the governance arrangements supporting the Programme of Work and its Delivery Plan.
 - As noted in paragraph 3, regular updates are provided to committee in respect of the supporting Community Investment Fund. An update is also provided to Finance and Resources Committee each cycle in respect of the Strategic Capital Investment Programme.
16. The governance supporting the Programme of Work recognises that not all of what is to be delivered through the Programme of Work is capital investment that will be monitored and governed through the Strategic Capital Delivery Group and Finance and Resources Committee, therefore arrangements are in place to ensure a focus on maintaining a corporate one place one plan one council approach across the organisation to ensure each stage of delivery through the Programme of Work - towards achieving the overall vision set out in The Plan for North Lanarkshire - is appropriately aligned, planned, guided, implemented, monitored, and governed. This approach comprises the following key points of note:
 - Since the Programme of Work to 2028 was approved in March 2023, six Programme of Work Strategic Boards have been established, with core and non-core members, and advisers identified (e.g. in respect of financial, legal, and risk). These Boards first began meeting in June 2023 approximately every four to eight weeks and have been supported by a range of governance processes which have been further standardised and aligned since. Each Programme of Work Strategic Board is chaired by a Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) with support from a Deputy SRO; all are Chief Officers and all are members of the Corporate Management Team. As the Boards have become established, the frequency of meetings has moved to quarterly in 2025.
 - 1:1 meetings are in place between the Senior Project Officer (Programme of Work) and each Programme of Work Senior Responsible Officer regarding papers and priorities for meetings. This includes regular reviews of the membership of each Board, including changes to SROs / Deputy SROs in line with the aforementioned organisational structural changes.
 - All Strategic Boards have completed a risk related Programme Uncertainty Level Status Evaluation (PULSE). A progress monitoring process is in place that includes the reporting of Risk through quarterly monitoring reports to each Strategic Board and the Corporate Management Team, and also a regular review and update to the PULSE. The purpose of the PULSE is as undernoted:
 - To determine the level of confidence in relation to key elements of uncertainty.
 - To assist the Strategic Board in understanding the interdependencies on its projects and activities from both projects and activities within its control and where there are dependencies on projects or activities as part of other Programmes of Work.
 - To assist the Strategic Board in understanding where other Programmes of Work / projects / activities have dependencies on the delivery of projects and activities within this Strategic Board's remit.
 - To assist the Strategic Board in its decision making and determining, should the need arise, the reprioritisation of projects or activities for delivery and delay or cancellation and ensuring that decision making considers and seeks to minimise resultant impacts across all Programmes of Work.
 - The single Integrated council wide Delivery Plan comprises a detailed plan of the actions to be delivered with indicative timescales, and responsible officers, against which Programme of Work delivery can be monitored. A Change Request process ensures a simple and seamless co-ordination and approvals process is in place to manage changes requested to the Delivery Plan.
 - The scale of local investment in delivering The Plan for North Lanarkshire (as set out in paragraphs 3 and 6) involves significant risks and means that good decision-making and

effective management of individual programmes and projects is vital if these are to be delivered to cost, time, and quality. The council's Project Management Framework therefore provides a comprehensive approach that outlines the processes and techniques which will help to scope and manage a project, meet agreed milestones, fulfil appropriate reporting and assurance requirements, involve the right people at the right time, implement each stage of delivery from start to finish, and achieve the expected benefits or improved outcomes of each project. It is designed to promote and encourage best practice in the management and delivery of capital and non-capital programmes - and construction and non-construction projects - and all projects across the council and aims to help all employees involved in project management regardless of their role and previous experience. The role of individual programme or project Senior Responsible Officers (SROs) / Project Managers is clearly set out therein.

- The key role of the Policy and Strategy Committee was reiterated in the aforementioned reports to committee in terms of ensuring the continuing commitment to delivering The Plan for North Lanarkshire through the Programme of Work and ensuring oversight of the council's approach to managing strategic change in this respect. The report in March 2024 ([link](#)), sets out that six monthly reporting arrangements will enable the Policy and Strategy Committee to maintain their strategic oversight role of the overall Programme of Work to 2028 in relation to *"development, co-ordination, and monitoring of The Plan for North Lanarkshire"* and to keep under review such *"programmes as the Committee considers necessary to achieve the council's long-term aims and objectives"*.
- An annual review process continues to support the Programme of Work to 2028. This ensures the council continues to (a) be able to adapt the Delivery Plan to changing circumstances, (b) absorb the impact of major unpredictable situations in order to keep plans relevant and the timescales therein realistic, and (c) assess incremental changes and impacts arising from updates to the results for the 28 health check indicators. This review process is carried out by each Strategic Board respectively (e.g. Brighter Futures and Digital North Lanarkshire have recently undertaken such a review) and, as noted in the report to committee in March 2025 ([link](#)), a wider interim review is currently underway of the overall Programme of Work.
- Following approval of the set of high-level Programme of Work Deliverables in September 2023, each Chief Officer has reviewed and updated their Project Register accordingly to ensure ongoing alignment. These Registers continue to be reviewed and updated twice a year, as per Corporate Management Team approval in September 2022 that Chief Officers would submit a copy of their Project Registers as at the end of September and as at the end of March. The latter date aligning to the submission of the Chief Officer Annual Certificate of Assurance and Checklist process that supports the council in demonstrating compliance with the principles of good governance, as set out in the national Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: Framework (2016).
- The updates to the Chief Officer Project Registers enabled the Quality Assurance arrangements (approved at Corporate Management Team in October 2023) to be implemented to assess compliance with the Project Management Framework. Quality Assurance arrangements in respect of the process to monitor delivery of projects and activities supporting the Programme of Work were rolled out in 2024 to all Programme of Work Project Managers / Activity Leads. This comprises the allocation of a RAG status against the seven aforementioned dimensions (i.e. risk, scope, quality, time / schedule, resources, cost / budget, and completed status) to each of the items in the Delivery Plan. The Quality Assurance process is subject to regular audits by Internal Audit and also to regular review and strategic oversight by the Audit and Scrutiny Panel (February 2024 - [link](#); February 2025 - [link](#)).
- Upon completion of the Delivery Plan for the Programme of Work, the Corporate Management Team carried out their strategic oversight role in February 2024 to provide a significant focus on delivering the Programme of Work and managing strategic change. This session played a key role in strengthening the strategic connections across all seven Programme of Work priorities to support delivery on the ground and in ensuring the direction in line with The Plan for North Lanarkshire remained steadfast. Following this initial session, each of the seven Programme of Work priorities was subject to strategic oversight and review at a wider Corporate Management Team session during 2024. These sessions provided the Corporate Management Team with achievements to date, priorities, progress being made in delivering the priorities, connections, impact on the 28 health check indicators, challenges, and any asks of the senior management team.
- Governance arrangements supporting the operation of the Strategic Boards include agendas, minutes, action notes, membership lists, terms of reference, PULSE risk assessment files, as

well as monitoring reports (reporting on progress of the Delivery Plan) to the Corporate Management Team and Strategic Boards. These files are available to view in the Audit Scotland / NLC shared evidence platform within the governance folder (and the various sub folders underneath).

17. As noted in paragraph 13, the Programme of Work is supported by a reporting schedule which provides an indicative timescale of when reports on specific Delivery Plan items are scheduled to be reported to stakeholders, including Elected Members progress reports to council committees. Quarterly monitoring reports are also produced for each of the Programme of Work Strategic Boards and the Corporate Management Team. A summary of all reports (as at cycle 1 of 2025), and the latest quarterly monitoring reports to the Corporate Management Team and the Strategic Boards, are available to view in the Audit Scotland / NLC shared evidence platform within the governance folder.

C. To what extent are communities and partners involved in the development and delivery of the council's plans for transformation?

18. As noted in paragraph 2, the one place one plan approach which The Plan for North Lanarkshire embodies - and the vision of inclusive growth and prosperity for all - was endorsed by all partners in the North Lanarkshire Community Planning Partnership and has had the ongoing commitment of partners and local Elected Members since it was established. Nine Community Boards are in place to support community involvement and provide a single approach for local community-led engagement and decision-making (as per the original plans set out in a report approved at committee in March 2020 [\(link\)](#)). This consistency of commitment at a strategic, community, and political level has led to significant achievements which have been pivotal in maximising the potential of North Lanarkshire as a place.
19. Stakeholder feedback continues to be central to developing delivery plans and priorities to progress Programme of Work projects and activities. This includes through Community Boards (as noted in paragraph 18 above) as well as the council's website [\(link\)](#) and Community Matters [\(link\)](#). Various public and stakeholder feedback events on many significant local developments have allowed residents to provide their views and shape the next steps; the most recent of these includes the following:
 - Development of the wider regeneration plans, that form part of the Programme of Work in terms of town action plans, were informed by public consultation. An update in this respect was reported to committee in May 2024 [\(link\)](#) and there are also dedicated web pages in respect of the town centres programme on the council's website [\(link\)](#). A briefing note, providing an update on delivery of the town centre transformation programme, is available to view in the Audit Scotland / NLC shared evidence platform within the communities and partners folder.
 - The first stage of consultation took place with local residents to develop the Cumbernauld Town Masterplan ran for six weeks and included an exhibition showing how the town centre could look through concept designs. Most feedback was supportive of the regeneration plans and wanted a town centre to be proud of. This was followed by the first steps to regenerate Cumbernauld town centre as contractors go on site to demolish Fleming House. This kicked off the 15-year plan to regenerate the town centre to create a new town hub with education, health, community and leisure facilities, public transport improvements, and modern bespoke retail and commercial outlets. The council's website contains dedicated web pages for the transformation of Cumbernauld Town Centre [\(link\)](#); this also provides information regarding consultation responses.
 - Residents were invited to share their views for a new Local Transport Strategy that will shape how the infrastructure is developed and maintained across North Lanarkshire over the next ten years. The Strategy also aims to support national efforts to reduce car use, lower carbon emissions, and promote active travel, such as walking, wheeling, and cycling. The council's website provides an update in respect of the strategy development [\(link\)](#).
 - Residents were invited to share their views on places in North Lanarkshire - homes, recreation, access, transport, employment, and services - as part of the preparations for the next Local Development Plan, which will decide where things like homes, shops, businesses, and amenities are built. The council's website [\(link\)](#) provides further information in this respect.

- Public consultation took place on the updated design for the East Airdrie Link Road (as part of the Glasgow City Region City Deal) to demonstrate the location of junctions, roundabouts, and bridges and show the reduced impact on land and properties. This is designed to improve journey times and transport reliability, air quality, and connections between residential areas, town centres, business centres, employment, and education by relieving congestion along the existing A73. The council's website provides an update in respect of the next steps for this programme ([link](#)).
 - Residents, partners, and local organisations were asked for their input to understand digital needs and preferences for two new digital zones in local facilities (at the Buchanan Centre in Coatbridge and Chryston High School). Digital zones will be a dedicated space equipped with technology and resources to help people improve their digital skills, get involved online, and feel more confident and digitally included.
 - The conclusion of a significant programme of public engagement in respect of the first phase of Rediscovering Airdrie. This programme aims to restore and repurpose heritage assets, improve the townscape, and increase community pride and awareness of local heritage in order to further promote North Lanarkshire an attractive visitor destination. This enables next steps development of plans and a funding application to support implementation of the programme. The council's website provides further information in respect of this programme ([link](#)).
 - Plans for Coatbridge include the establishment of a Neighbourhood Board and related governance arrangements, development of a Regeneration Plan, and an accompanying initial four-year investment plan and governance requirements - an update in this respect was reported to committee in May 2025 ([link](#)). This is accompanied by a consultation and engagement findings report for the long-term plan for Coatbridge which is also available to view in the Audit Scotland / NLC shared evidence platform within the communities and partners folder along with the outputs from a perceptions study.
20. The council's Communications and Engagement Strategy (updated in June 2024 - [link](#)) demonstrates the approach to stakeholder engagement in respect of council's plans. Engagement is also a key part of the development of the leadership and operating model for the Hub programme (latest reports in this respect: June 2024 - [link](#) and December 2024 - [link](#)) which also involves the integration of partner organisations within Community Hubs.
21. Following approval of the series of reports at Policy and Strategy Committee in March 2024, a programme of staff roadshows was developed to be delivered by the council's Chief Officers in 42 venues across North Lanarkshire on a range of dates and times from April until the end of June 2024. The programme included sessions with Elected Members, Community Boards, and partners. The aim was to communicate the key messages to participants in respect of The Plan for North Lanarkshire and what it has achieved to date and what the priorities are for delivery moving forward. It provides an opportunity for participants to engage directly in the delivery phase of the Programme of Work.
- Following a presentation at each of the Roadshows, an engagement session was facilitated with participants and feedback sought. The majority of most staff feedback aspects was extremely positive, especially around supporting and being part of The Plan for North Lanarkshire and the Programme of Work - in this respect 92% of attendees advised they thought their role contributes to The Plan for North Lanarkshire and 80% said they thought the Programme of Work was getting it right in terms of achieving the right outcomes. A summary of the feedback is available to view in the Audit Scotland / NLC shared evidence platform within the communities and partners folder.
22. A new Community Ownership and Management of Council-Owned Assets policy was approved at committee in June 2024 ([link](#)) to assist in the better use of assets by community groups, whether through formal Community Asset Transfer or other mechanisms. This policy brings together all elements of community use in a single place and sets out the requirements for groups, the council, and other stakeholders. It also includes a framework for consideration of leases with respect to council assets. This policy supports the place-based vision of The Plan for North Lanarkshire by empowering local communities and giving them control over assets owned or leased by public bodies, including councils, that can be used to address local need, promote community development, and enhance wellbeing. An annual report is submitted to committee in respect of community engagement and participation in this process, with the latest being in August 2024 ([link](#)).

Since the introduction of the policy, four transfers have been approved at committee:

- Overtown sports pitch and pavilion - October 2024 ([link](#))
- Application from Palm Church for the asset transfer of Rochsoles Community Centre - April 2025 ([link](#))
- Application from Chapelhall Community Development Group for the transfer of land at Chapelhall Senior Citizens Centre - April 2025 ([link](#))
- Application from Deaf Services Lanarkshire for the asset transfer of Shawhead Community Centre - April 2025 ([link](#))

23. Various oversight and outcome reports are considered by the council and partnership bodies to further support widespread engagement and involvement; this includes the following:

- An annual oversight and outcome report to committee (latest in February 2025 - [link](#)) highlights where community planning in North Lanarkshire is making a positive impact in strengthening partnership working and improving outcomes in line with The Plan for North Lanarkshire's shared ambition.
- A six monthly update to committee reports on progress and provides a snapshot linked to key priorities for each of the nine Local Outcome Improvement Plans (LOIPs) (latest in February 2025 - [link](#)). The report also provides an overview of progress with implementation of the Management and Monitoring Framework and work to develop the role of the Local Partnership Teams.
- A report to committee each cycle provides an update on key progress linked to supporting the Community Boards model and the Boards and partnership communications strategy therein; the latest of which was reported in April 2025 ([link](#)).
- The North Lanarkshire Partnership Strategic Leadership Board (SLB) for the Community Planning Partnership continues to meet approx. every 10 weeks and the delivery of many Programme of Work activities are discussed to seek wider involvement. New, or updates to, partnership policies (e.g. the Lanarkshire Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy, Tackling Poverty Strategy, Children's Services Partnership, and the Community Safety Strategy) are also reviewed and discussed to ensure ongoing alignment with the vision for North Lanarkshire. Copies of a sample of the SLB meeting papers are available to view in the Audit Scotland / NLC shared evidence platform within the communities and partners folder.

24. Since adopting The Plan for North Lanarkshire when it was established in 2019, the North Lanarkshire Partnership Strategic Leadership Board (SLB) for the Community Planning Partnership has continued to be integral in the development and delivery of the Programme of Work and partnership activities therein. The Programme of Work and annual performance report (in respect of the 28 health check indicators) have remained key items on the SLB agenda to (a) ensure ongoing alignment of activities supporting delivery of The Plan for North Lanarkshire, (b) support an informed and constructive peer challenge and review process across partner organisations, and (c) inform discussions and decisions in relation to partnership activities (e.g. around public health and whole family support) in order to stay true to the ambition for whole place-based transformation of North Lanarkshire (through a one place one plan approach) and ensure the partnership remains focused on transformational change for the benefit of local communities and to improve the lives of local people.

25. As noted in paragraph 13, the Programme of Work is supported by a reporting schedule which provides an indicative timescale of when reports on specific Delivery Plan items are scheduled to be reported to stakeholders, including Elected Members progress reports to council committees. This is available to view in the Audit Scotland / NLC shared evidence platform within the governance folder. Many articles are also available on the council's [website](#) to support wider public performance reporting. Some examples include:

- Economic Regeneration Delivery Plan (ERDP) - annual performance report, the latest of which was reported to committee in August 2024 ([link](#)) and to the public through news articles ([link](#) and [link](#)).
- New supply programme - regular progress update report, the latest of which was reported to committee in November 2024 ([link](#)) and to the public through news articles ([link](#)). Reports and news articles in this respect also provide an update in respect of community benefits ([link](#) and [link](#)).

- Housing and homelessness - annual performance is reported via the council's website ([link](#) and [link](#)) and through the Temporary Accommodation Strategy 2024-29 ([link](#)).
26. Following a short-life Elected Member / Officer working group to examine the relationship and dependencies between the council, the third sector, and communities and consider how the longer-term sustainability of the third sector could be supported, a report with recommendations was approved at committee in December 2024 ([link](#)). While the work of the group, and its recommendations, are owned by the council, their successful implementation necessarily involves considerable input, and in some cases partial ownership by a range of others, including VANL, the other community planning partners and representatives of the third sector. As such, formal and informal structures in places are being used to increase awareness of the work of the group and ensure that the actions required to ensure successful implementation are well understood by all stakeholders.
27. A range of targeted community based initiatives are underway, some recent examples in this respect are summarised below.
- Delivery of the Digital North Lanarkshire programme of work is supported by twice yearly updates on progress with the Driving Digital Locally sub-group (latest reports February 2025 - [link](#)). These reports provide an update on progress to date in terms of a number of key local digital activities, this includes the progress of the Driving Digital Locally working group, success of the intergenerational projects which bring together elderly residents and local primary schools, feedback regarding the stakeholder engagement for the proposed Digital Zones, the public Wi-Fi project, and the online chatbot tool.
 - Three more immersive experience facilities are now in operation at Motherwell Library, Summerlee Heritage Centre, and Airdrie Library to add to the innovative experience first launched at Muirfield Community Centre. These create opportunities for communities, staff, and partners in many aspects, including digital skills development, health and wellbeing improvement, social skills development, educational attainment, and pathways to future learning and employment. Updates in this respect were reported to committee in August 2024 ([link](#)) and October 2024 ([link](#)).
 - Following national funding, the council introduced access to free period products in schools; this was followed by additional funding to all local authorities to increase the number and range of places where period products are available free of charge to those who need them, with a focus on publicly accessible buildings. The purpose of the funding for schools remains to support equality, dignity, and rights for those who menstruate and to ensure that lack of access to products does not impact on an individual's ability to fully participate in education, at all levels. The main intent of the wider roll out for community provision remains tackling poverty but also wider need and to address the overarching gender equality and dignity issues that affect all of those who menstruate regardless of income. Currently, spending is split between school and community provision. This approach has been designed to reflect the needs of communities across the council area and continues to be informed by the findings from online consultation with residents. An update in this respect was provided to committee in October 2024 ([link](#)).
28. In February 2025, the council and NHS Lanarkshire signed up to working collaboratively on two of Scotland's largest infrastructure projects to benefit people in Lanarkshire ([link](#)). The proposed East Airdrie Link Road ([link](#)) is planned to improve connectivity and reduce journey times across the region, including providing access to the state-of-the-art new University Hospital Monklands ([link](#) and [link](#)). The Memorandum of Understanding, signed by the council and the health board's Monklands Replacement Project (MRP), sets out the agreement to work together to deliver the best outcomes for communities. This file, along with the terms of reference for the project interface board, is available to view in the Audit Scotland / NLC shared evidence platform within the communities and partners folder.

D. To what extent has the council considered the impact of its transformation activity, including on vulnerable or protected groups?

29. As noted in paragraphs 10 and 11, The Plan for North Lanarkshire is supported by a suite of high-level health check indicators that collectively provide the context for North Lanarkshire as a place.

By providing the local demographic, social, and economic profile these indicators were key to shaping the long-term vision set out in The Plan for North Lanarkshire when it was approved in 2019, and they have continued to provide a robust, consistent, and independent way of assessing progress and impact since then. The suite of indicators has also played an important role in terms of informing the council's strategic planning process through the Programme of Work.

30. The latest results for each of the 28 Health Check Indicators (reported to committee in March 2025 - [link](#)) now reflect a period after the pandemic. This has enabled a much clearer interpretation of the impact of the pandemic on what The Plan for North Lanarkshire set out to achieve when it was established. The impact can be seen in much of the data for the years 2020 and 2021 (the pandemic years) compared to 2019 (pre-pandemic) and 2022, 2023, and 2024 (the aftermath of the pandemic). Notwithstanding this, there remains significant gains when comparing the latest results available to the baseline set when The Plan for North Lanarkshire was established in 2019, and the latest results show positive trends in a number of key economic and social indicators. It should be noted that the summary below reflects a moment in time when the report was submitted to committee in March 2025.

- Gross weekly pay continues to show a positive increase for the third year in a row; wages are level with the national average. For both full-time and part-time workers, the gap in the hourly rate of pay between males and females continues to narrow and remains smaller than it is nationally.
- Following a period of decline and slow recovery, self-employed rates are now showing a marked improvement that returns this position to pre-pandemic levels.
- Economic growth continues to show a positive picture with the latest results showing an increase of almost 9% in gross value added per head.
- The number of working age people claiming employment related benefits has continued the gradual downward trend that was first experienced towards the end of 2020 and is now 8% lower than The Plan for North Lanarkshire baseline.
- School exclusion rates continue to show significant improvement for both measures in relation to all pupils and looked after children, with the latest figures now below the national average and the comparator figures for similar councils.
- The gap in educational attainment between overall results and results for pupils living in the 20% most deprived areas shows a decline compared to recent years and is lower than the national average.
- Life expectancy for males in North Lanarkshire has shown a small gain following two data series dips in a row.
- Satisfaction levels for carers feeling supported to continue their caring role has improved in the most recent survey.
- North Lanarkshire's waste recycling rates have reached an all-time high and are now above the national average.

31. An update in respect of the council's Public Sector Equality Duty was reported to committee in April 2025 ([link](#)); this reports that the vision in The Plan for North Lanarkshire has been fully reflected in the equality outcomes for 2021 to 2025. Moving forward, 10 outcomes have been set for 2025 to 2029; this follows extensive consultation and evidence gathering exercises to ensure the final outcomes were informed by:

- The council's continuing ambitions, priorities, and Programme of Work.
- The progress made in relation to the council's equality outcomes 2021-25.
- Evidence which shows where the most disadvantage and inequality persist for different groups of people protected by the Equality Act 2010.
- Direct input from services on known challenges and priorities for disadvantaged groups.
- The views of local people (who share protected characteristics and represent those people), employees, and Elected Members through direct engagement activity.
- Information from the 2022 Census.
- The *Is Scotland Fairer* report published by the Equality and Human Rights Commission.
- The Public Sector Equality Duty (General Duty).
- In light of the progress in the development of the council's operating model for the Hubs programme, and significant consultation with residents and communities on their preferences for future service delivery (including a focus on accessing services via digital technology), a

new equality outcome was also included to reflect the council's clear intent to develop service delivery arrangements that will better take account of the needs of residents with protected characteristics.

32. The update in respect of the council's Public Sector Equality Duty in April 2025 ([link](#)) also provides information on progress over the last four years (2021 to 2025) and what aspects of the general duty each outcome advances. Each outcome also includes a spotlight initiative to highlight areas of success and to bring to life some of the work undertaken to achieve progress against each outcome.
- Aligned to all Programme of Work priorities, the council's equality outcomes are specifically mainstreamed within four of the priorities for delivery to ensure that equality sits at the very heart of the council's transformation programme, i.e. Resilient People, Brighter Futures, Digital North Lanarkshire, and One Service (April 2025 - [link](#)).
 - In May 2023, the Wellbeing and Tackling Poverty Committee endorsed a vision and strategy to become a trauma informed and responsive organisation ([link](#)). The values and principles which underpin being trauma informed align with The Plan for North Lanarkshire and, as such, trauma is now a core component of the Programme of Work to 2028. The council and the Health and Social Care Partnership signed the leadership pledge of support in 2023 to publicly commit to this ambition and appointed three senior managers and an Elected Member as champions to drive this change programme forward.
33. Equality and Fairer Scotland Duty impact assessments are published on the council's website: [link](#)). EQIAs to accompany the programmes noted in paragraph 13 are available to view from the links below:
- Economic Regeneration Delivery Plan (ERDP) ([link](#)).
 - New supply programme ([link](#)).
 - The EQIAs in respect of the Hub programme (and its supporting leadership and operating model) are available to view in the Audit Scotland / NLC shared evidence platform within the equalities folder.
34. A range of targeted community based transformational initiatives are underway which have a focus on vulnerable or protected groups. Recent examples in this respect are summarised below:
- As referenced in paragraph 27 above, the Driving Digital Locally intergenerational project aims to educate older residents about digital technology through one-to-one training with young people within their own community. Launched in 2022, this initiative encourages residents based at retirement complexes to embrace technology, removing barriers to digital access and subsequently transforming their life. Now delivered in seven communities, the project has supported 80 elderly tenants and 115 school pupils in North Lanarkshire to improve digital skills through one-to-one training, supporting the tenants live safer, healthier, and more connected lives. Nominated as a finalist for a Municipal Journal award (see brochure in shared evidence platform), this project is one of the case studies submitted to the Best Value auditors which demonstrates the transformation in local communities that is impacting on the lives of old and young residents alike (and aligns to the Accounts Commission transformation principles of vision, planning, governance, collaboration, and innovation). This case study is available to view in the Audit Scotland / NLC shared evidence platform within the case study folder.
 - Approved at committee in March 2025, the Digital Connectivity masterplan for council housing tenants aims to provide digital connectivity for council housing tenants, creating the foundations for transformational change to facilitate the introduction of enabling technologies and solutions across multiple aspects of modern life. It builds on previous work undertaken to identify potential delivery options and outlines the potential benefits of enabling digital connectivity for council housing tenants, which will open up endless possibilities to radically transform, for the better, the way in which the council delivers supports and services, empowering tenants with increased choice and control over how they interact with services, enabling faster access to services and improving customer experience. At a more fundamental level, the report approved in March 2025 ([link](#)) outlines the benefits realised which will provide tenants with the foundations to achieve their full potential and prosper, improving access to opportunities and reducing inequalities.

- The Tackling Poverty Strategy update (reported to committee in April 2025 - [link](#)) focuses on a number of initiatives that aim to deliver on the strategy driver of income from employment. This demonstrates the impact of council and partnership activities in this respect on targeted groups of individuals across North Lanarkshire.
- Many community benefits have been derived through Programme of Work activities for various specific programmes and targeted at vulnerable or protected groups. This includes providing jobs and training through the new supply programme, creating opportunities for local businesses and supply chains through large scale regeneration programmes, targeted training and recruitment for pupils with additional support needs, and summer placement programmes for young people about to leave school. Financial benefits have also been gained such as donations from various groups to build beds for disabled plot holders and to work with young people living in deprived areas, with non-financial support received from contractors donating training, time, and excess materials for local projects.

North Lanarkshire Council Report

Policy and Strategy Committee

Does this report require to be approved?

☒ Yes ☐ No

Ref LN/PH

Date

05/06/25

City Deal Programme – East Airdrie Link Road Update

From Pamela Humphries, Chief Officer (Place)

E-mail NobleLy@northlan.gov.uk

Telephone

Lyndsay Noble
07970016256

Executive Summary

This East Airdrie Link Road (EALR) Update Report informs the Policy and Strategy Committee of the progress made to date on the Project and shares the details of the Pre Application Notice and Pre Application Consultation that will support the next key milestone of submitting a Planning application for the East Airdrie Link Road.

As part of the Pre Application Notice, approval is sought for the inclusion of the Towers Road link within the East Airdrie Link Road Project. The Towers Road link has the potential to provide an important east west link to the East Airdrie Link Road and provide a second access to the Monklands Replacement Hospital.

The opportunities the Towers Road link offers to both NHS Lanarkshire and North Lanarkshire Council in supporting the delivery of two major investment Projects are also set out for Committee.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Policy and Strategy Committee:

- (1) Acknowledges the progress of the East Airdrie Link Project, and
- (2) Approves the inclusion of the Towers Road link within the scope of the East Airdrie Link Road Project, subject to conclusion of viability assessment and funding.

The Plan for North Lanarkshire

Priority	Improve economic opportunities and outcomes
Ambition statement	(5) Grow and improve the sustainability and diversity of North Lanarkshire's economy
Programme of Work	Transforming Places

1. Background

- 1.1 The Glasgow City Region (GCR) City Deal is an agreement between the UK and Scottish Governments and the eight GCR Local Authorities, with the sole focus of creating additional economic growth. The 20-year GCR Deal was accepted by GCR Council Leaders on 20 August 2014 and incorporated:
- implementing a £1.13bn Infrastructure Fund to improve the regional transport network, regenerate sites for economic use and improve public transport provision;
 - supporting growth in the life sciences sector;
 - helping small and medium enterprises to grow and develop;
 - establishing programmes to support the unemployed; and
 - piloting new ways of boosting the incomes of low wage employees.
- 1.2 The review of City Deal Programme took place in 2024 to ensure the Programme remained fit for purpose and aligned to the Plan for North Lanarkshire and Programmes of Work and to manage project delivery and, importantly, to assess cost pressures on the projects. Following Enterprise and Fair Work Committee approval in May 2024 and Glasgow City Region Cabinet approval in August 2024, the revised Programme now allows for a stronger focus on strategic connectivity, and new road infrastructure to enable regeneration and development.
- 1.3 The City Deal Programme for North Lanarkshire, as part of the infrastructure fund comprises the following sub projects:
- A8/M8 Corridor Access Improvements
 - Strategic Active Travel
 - Orchard farm Roundabout
 - Glenboig Link Road (complete)
 - Pan-Lan Orbital Transport Corridor
 - East Airdrie Link Road
 - Ravenscraig Access Infrastructure South (Motherwell to Ravenscraig and Airbles Road Improvements)
 - Motherwell Town Centre Transport Interchange (complete)
- 1.4 This report focuses on the East Airdrie Link Road (EALR), a critical part of the Pan Lanarkshire Transport Corridor. The Pan Lanarkshire Transport Corridor is a strategic north south corridor that connects South Lanarkshire, the M74, to Ravenscraig, the M8 at Chapelhall, to Cumbernauld, the M80 and beyond. A regional investment of scale and complexity bringing significant economic and transport benefits to North Lanarkshire and the Glasgow City Region. The largest City Deal Project in the Glasgow City Deal Programme, the EALR presents opportunities for vast direct and indirect benefits as detailed in section 3 of this report.
- 1.5 As Committee is aware, the EALR will create a new north to south link between the M8 and south of Cumbernauld. The proposed 10km single carriageway link will provide an enhanced north south route through North Lanarkshire; to provide more reliable orbital journeys through North Lanarkshire and to the wider City Region. It will improve connectivity between main residential areas and clusters of employment in North Lanarkshire and will enable significant employment, education and training opportunities.

- 1.6 The proposed link road will also provide access to the Monklands Replacement Hospital at Wester Moffat, Airdrie. NHS Lanarkshire secured approval for their Outline Business Case in July 2023 and planning permission for the new hospital in June 2024. The Monklands Replacement Hospital Project is now moving forward with enabling works well underway and continuing throughout 2025 and 2026. NHS Lanarkshire are working with their contractor, Laing O'Rourke, alongside their consultancy design team to progress the Project to Full Business Case in 2025.
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2. Report

2.1 East Airdrie Link Road Update

- 2.1.1 The Enterprise and Fair Work Committee approved the submission of the EALR Outline Business Case in May 2024 and the Glasgow City Region Cabinet subsequently approved the Outline Business Case in August 2024, which included the programme, budget allocation and transport and economic benefits, allowing the Project to progress to Full Business Case.
- 2.1.2 The Project is firmly in the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) Stage 3 (preliminary design and planning), whereby the EALR project team are working with consultants, AtkinsRealis to reach a critical milestone of a planning submission later this year. The planning application will be supported by an extensive environmental impact assessment (EIA) considering the effect of the link road on the road network, the environment, on noise, air quality and human health.
- 2.1.3 The Project is progressing at pace, with many key elements being carried out in parallel to maintain programme and manage costs, with the final road alignment design due to be concluded in September 2025. To support this, public and landowner engagement took place during November 2024 to January 2025 on the first draft of the proposed road alignment design. Feedback and comments received during the engagement has informed the second draft road alignment design. Responses received through this engagement and earlier engagement have been fully considered and where relevant have influenced and changed how the road alignment and its associated infrastructure will be taken forward.
- 2.1.4 The engagement with local members, statutory stakeholders, residents, land owners and the wider public has been invaluable in developing the link road from the preferred route option at DMRB Stage 2, to a road alignment that will form the basis of a Pre Planning Application Notice (PAN) and Pre Application Consultation (PAC) in advance of the planning application planned for late 2025.
- 2.1.5 Extensive survey and design work, alongside the engagement feedback, has enabled a well-defined second draft road alignment and has allowed a greater focus on the positioning of the road structures, better integration of the new road with local roads, and importantly, more refinement of the alignment to lessen the impact on land, ecology, landscape and woodland.
- 2.1.6 A Pre-Application Notice (PAN) has been submitted to the Local Planning Authority on 30 May 2025. The second draft road alignment forms the basis of the Pre-Application Notice and the associated Pre-Application consultation (PAC). The statutory consultation as part of the PAN is intended to take place over summer with a second

consultation programmed for autumn 2025. The outcome of the PAN/PAC will lead to a third and final road alignment design being concluded to allow for the submission of the planning application.

2.1.7 Following the submission of the PAN, the first round of statutory consultation will take place on the dates and venues below:

- Tuesday 17th June 2025 at Airdrie Library between 14.00 and 19:00
- Thursday 19th June 2025 at Chapelhall Library between 14.00 and 19:00
- Tuesday 24th June at Cumbernauld Library between 14.00 and 19:00

2.1.8 The EALR project team and the councils' consultants will be present during the above times to discuss the link road proposal and address questions and comments. These in person consultation events will also be supplemented by an 8-week online consultation from Monday 16th June to enable the information to be viewed and feedback submitted online.

2.1.9 In advance of the Pre Application Consultation, the EALR Project Team have updated the Enterprise and Fair Work Committee on the 2 May 2025, briefed local members on 15 May 2025 and have attended the Cumbernauld Community Board (27 May 2025) and Airdrie Community Board (4 June 2025).

2.1.10 To support the design work and planning application, environmental surveys are taking place across the extent of the proposed link road. Additional ground investigation work will take place over summer 2025 to confirm the final preliminary design particularly in regard to structures and bridges. It will also inform the construction methodology for the link road and provide further certainty over construction costs and overall project budget.

2.1.11 As advised to the Enterprise and Fair Work Committee, this Committee will be aware, that the council requires to acquire the land to construct the EALR. As the road alignment progresses and becomes fixed, this allows the land take required to be better understood and for the land strategy to be developed and implemented.

2.1.12 Given the scale and length of the EALR, the number of landowners is substantial and the risk of acquiring all the land at the same time to build the entire link road is considered to be of a level that will require a compulsory purchase order (CPO). This Committee is advised that it is the EALR project team's intention to bring further information back to the Enterprise and Fair Work Committee later this year on the proposed land strategy including the potential for voluntary acquisition and CPO for the EALR. In time, a proposal for consideration and approval to promote a CPO for the necessary land for the link road delivery shall be submitted to the appropriate committee.

2.1.13 As highlighted above in paragraph 1.6, the EALR will provide access to the Monklands Replacement Hospital. An important element in managing the interface between the two projects is programme alignment, minimising risk of delay to either the council or NHS Lanarkshire and maximising the benefits that these two large scale infrastructure schemes will generate.

2.1.14 The EALR project team liaise with NHS Lanarkshire through regular technical meetings and a Project Interface Board has been established to provide governance around coordination, risk management, delivery efficiencies, and to maximise benefits and

outcomes. Through the continued partnership working with NHS Lanarkshire, a second access to the hospital and a link to the EALR has been identified.

2.2 Towers Road Link

2.2.1 An additional access to the Wester Moffat site, the Towers Road link, has been identified by the council and NHS Lanarkshire as an option that offers the Monklands Hospital and the EALR significant benefits. The proposed additional access is an extension of the route from the hospital junction on the EALR and the approved internal hospital road infrastructure to Towers Road near the junction with Varnsdorf Way, as can be seen in figure 1 below.

2.2.2 This link from Towers Road to the EALR offers additional construction access to both projects, provides a corridor for some of the hospital's public utilities but more importantly, will create a second permanent direct route to the hospital for patients, staff, public transport, active travel and emergency services and a valuable east west link for the EALR to enhance the connectivity to the local road network. The Towers Road link also benefits the immediate local road network with road improvements to Towers Road. The link would divert hospital-related traffic away from other local roads like Stepends Road or Roughrigg Road.

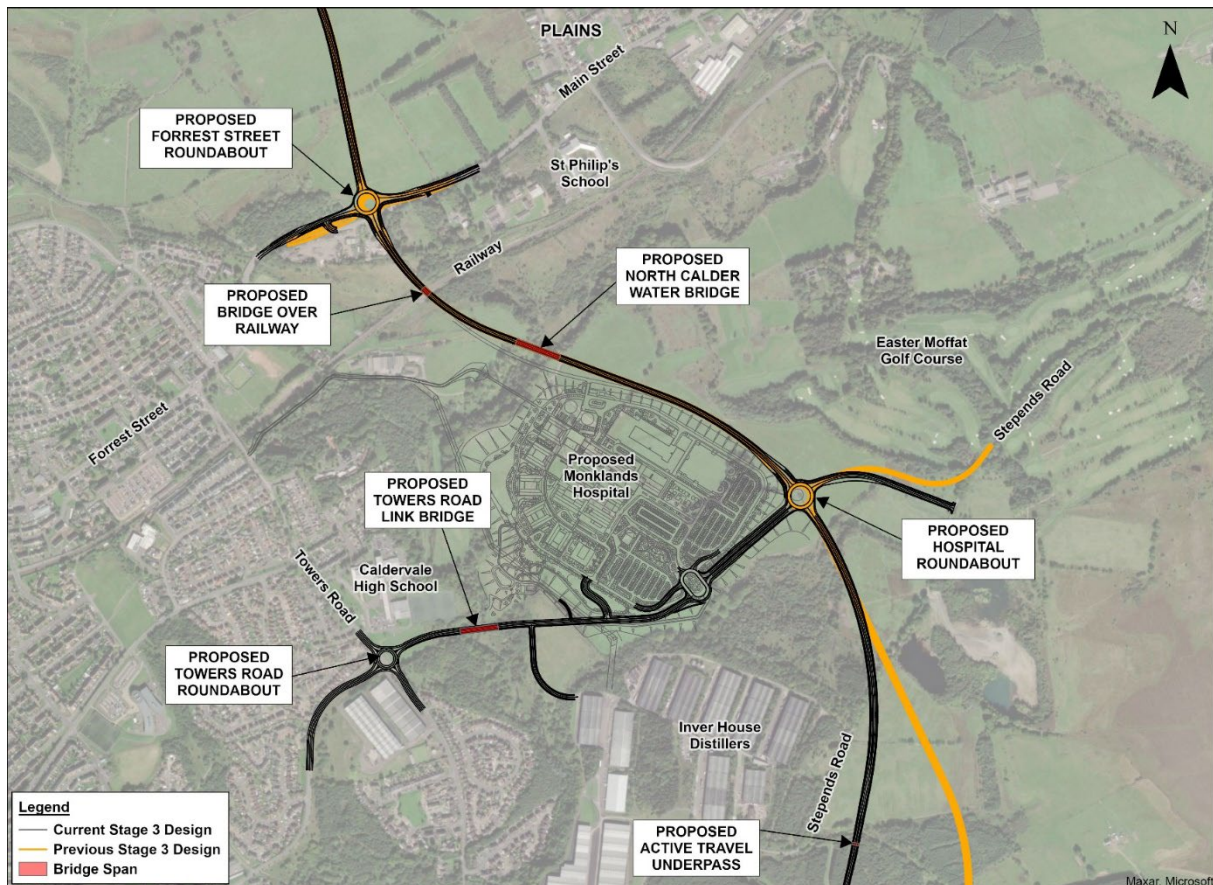


Figure 1 – Proposed Towers Road Link and section of East Airdrie Link Road.

- 2.2.3 Following consideration of this report by Committee, approval is sought for the inclusion, in principle, of the second access in the EALR Project and for its inclusion within the future planning application. There may also be an opportunity that the Towers Road link and a section of the EALR from the Hospital junction to the A89 (Forrest Street) could form the first phase of the road infrastructure delivery. This could, subject to planning consent and land acquisition, allow for these elements to be brought forward and be constructed earlier than currently programmed.
- 2.2.4 This early delivery could bring substantial advantages for access both to the hospital site and the EALR site to aid construction but importantly derisks programme challenges between the projects and has the added benefits of potentially reducing impacts of inflation on project costs.
- 2.2.5 Following the outcome of the Pre Application Consultation and further feasibility and design development, an update report will be provided to the Enterprise and Fair Work Committee regarding the proposed inclusion of the Towers Road link within the scope of the EALR to support effective and efficient delivery of both the EALR project and the Monklands Replacement Hospital.
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3. Measures of success

- 3.1 As Committee will be aware, as part of a North Lanarkshire City Deal Programme review, the current construction timescales for the Pan Lanarkshire Orbital Transport Corridor have been approved and are as follows (construction only):

Pan Lanarkshire Orbital Transport Corridor:

- Muir Street – January 2022 to June 2023 (complete)
 - Ravenscraig Access Infrastructure – March 2022 to March 2029 (no longer including RAI N but including the reprofiling of Airbles Road)
 - **East Airdrie Link Road – May 2028 to Sept 2030**
- 3.2 The Pan Lanarkshire Orbital Transport Corridor Programme and its sub projects have been developed to ensure that at a North Lanarkshire level, North Lanarkshire's residents and businesses will directly benefit. As part of the business case process, through the Economic Impact Assessment, outputs and wider benefits are identified and are set out in a Benefits Realisation Profile. The EALR Outline Business Case identifies the economic impacts and quantifies and details when outputs will be delivered and achieved as a result of the specific project investment.

The EALR project will deliver direct benefits of -:

- Redistribution of strategic traffic from congested local road networks through Chapelhall and Airdrie, to a new strategic road link. This will enable transport efficiencies to be realised including journey time savings; improved journey reliability; improved public transport reliability and improved safety for motorised and non-motorised users. It will also enable continued improvement of air quality standards within the Chapelhall area through reduced traffic volume and congestion on the B799;

- Access and strategic road network capacity provided for the planned Monklands Replacement Hospital at Wester Moffat, a key development within the Airdrie area and a health care priority for NHS Lanarkshire;
- Improved transport connectivity within the northern section of the Pan Lanarkshire Orbital Transport Corridor;
- Improved connectivity by active travel between residential areas, local services and facilities and employment opportunities.

Indirect benefits will also be generated from the EALR Investment as set out in the approved Outline Business case.

- Economic activity stimulated through investment in allocated residential and commercial development sites in proximity to the East Airdrie Link Road corridor, including at South Cumbernauld Community Growth Area. This will lever in significant follow-on private sector investment, with associated further one-off (construction) and continuous employment benefits;
- Improved marketability and viability of long term stalled residential and commercial development sites, particularly within the Plains area;
- Improved access to employment opportunities, local services and facilities from communities across the Airdrie area, with resultant employment benefits and associated knock-on impacts including increased spend in the local economy, a more economically active population; health and wellbeing benefits and wider socio-economic benefits;
- Construction of new active travel route infrastructure (shared use footways/cycleways alongside main and secondary road networks) and enhancement of existing cycle paths to current shared use standards.

- 3.3 At the City Region level, from a public sector perspective, the EALR Project will generate a positive return with a Public Sector BCR of 2.5. This means that for every £1 of public sector money spent, £2.50 net additional GVA is generated in the City Region.
- 3.4 The benefits will be measured over a 10-year period, reporting as part of the GCR Gateways until 2035. Gateway 2, an onerous review of the completed GCR projects and their outputs and outcomes has concluded successfully which allows for the next 5-year tranche of funding to be released.
- 3.5 All North Lanarkshire City Deal contracts seek to maximise community benefits from contracts awarded for the Project. Community Benefits will be secured through the procurement of services and works in line with the City Deal Community Benefit Strategy. The Community Benefits will be delivered through the design, planning and implementation phases, through contracts directly awarded by North Lanarkshire Council and where relevant, its partners. The Community Benefits menu within the City Deal Community Benefits Strategy will be used to target benefits that support the Council's key aims and objectives and deliver against priorities.

4. Supporting documentation

4.1 No supporting documents.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Humphries'.

Pamela Humphries
Chief Officer (Place)

5. Impacts

5.1 Public Sector Equality Duty and Fairer Scotland Duty

Does the report contain information that has an impact as a result of the Public Sector Equality Duty and/or Fairer Scotland Duty?

Yes ☒ No ☐

If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?

The City Deal Cabinet has agreed that Inclusive Growth is to be fully embedded within the GCR City Deal programme delivery and that it is also committed to supporting the delivery of the Fairer Scotland Action Plan. Future NLC subproject OBC/FBC development will be scrutinised to ensure it meets the duties of the Fairer Scotland Action Plan.

If Yes, has an assessment been carried out and published on the council's website? <https://www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/your-community/equalities/equality-and-fairer-scotland-duty-impact-assessments>

Yes ☒ No ☐

5.2 Financial impact

Does the report contain any financial impacts?

Yes ☒ No ☐

If Yes, have all relevant financial impacts been discussed and agreed with Finance?

Yes ☒ No ☐

If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?

Following Enterprise and Fair Work Committee approval (May 2024) and GCR Cabinet Approval on 6 August 2024, the revised North Lanarkshire Glasgow City Region City Deal Programme is as follows:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|----------------|
| • Glenboig Link Road | £6.2m |
| • A8/M8 Corridor Access Improvements | |
| ○ Orchard Farm | £2.2m |
| ○ Eurocentral Active Travel | £4.3m |
| • Pan-Lan Orbital Transport Corridor | |
| ○ East Airdrie Link Road | £185.3m |
| ○ Muir Street | £3.8m |
| ○ Ravenscraig Access Infrastructure | £74.2m |
| • Total | £276m |

This overall Programme is funded £149m by the GCR City Deal Infrastructure Fund and £127m by North Lanarkshire Council.

The East Airdrie Link Road Project budget is £185.3m. This has been approved by the Glasgow City Region Cabinet as part of the Outline Business Case. It will be funded as follows:

GCR City Deal Infrastructure Fund (86%)	£72.85m
Member Contribution (14%)	£11.86m
North Lanarkshire Council	£100.6m
Total	£185.3m

In addition, a contribution from NHS Lanarkshire will be sought to cover the cost of the EALR realignment to accommodate the Monklands Replacement Hospital. This approach has been agreed with NHS L and a funding agreement will be prepared and will be incorporated into the Full Business Case for both the Hospital and the Full Business Case for EALR in due course.

It is currently projected that the additional costs of the inclusion of the Towers Road link could be met from the project budget and the contribution from NHS Lanarkshire. This is subject to further design and cost assessment work.

Expected cash flows up to 2028/29 for the wider City Deal programme, including EALR are incorporated into the current strategic capital investment programme as approved at Policy and Strategy Committee in March 2025. The cost modelling and funding will be kept under continual review as the Council approaches the development of the next 5-year strategic capital investment programme.

5.3 HR policy impact

Does the report contain any HR policy or procedure impacts?

Yes ☐ No ☒

If Yes, have all relevant HR impacts been discussed and agreed with People Resources?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?

5.4 Legal impact

Does the report contain any legal impacts (such as general legal matters, statutory considerations (including employment law considerations), or new legislation)?

Yes ☒ No ☐

If Yes, have all relevant legal impacts been discussed and agreed with Legal and Democratic?

Yes ☒ No ☐

If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?

The City Deal Team work closely with Legal Services on all sub projects focusing on land acquisition and CPO, procurement and contract preparation and management, funding agreements and any other related matters.

5.5 Data protection impact

Does the report / project / practice contain or involve the processing of personal data?

Yes ☐ No ☒

If Yes, is the processing of this personal data likely to result in a high risk to the data subject?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If Yes, has a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) been carried out and e-mailed to dataprotection@northlan.gov.uk

Yes ☐ No ☐

5.6 Technology / Digital impact

Does the report contain information that has an impact on either technology, digital transformation, service redesign / business change processes, data management, or connectivity / broadband / Wi-Fi?

Yes ☐ No ☒

<p>If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?</p> <p>Where the impact identifies a requirement for significant technology change, has an assessment been carried out (or is scheduled to be carried out) by the Enterprise Architecture Governance Group (EAGG)?</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>5.7 Environmental / Carbon impact</p> <p>Does the report / project / practice contain information that has an impact on any environmental or carbon matters?</p> <p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?</p> <p>All infrastructure projects developed by the council as part of the GCR City Deal will be subject to relevant environmental and sustainability appraisal and as part of the design process and subsequent planning application approvals and procurement.</p> <p>Furthermore, to adhere with HM Treasury Greenbook best practice, each iteration of project business case seeking GCR City Deal funding will include a review of the sustainability considerations, this will include carbon management, involving categorisation, assessment and mitigation.</p> <p>As part of the design of the EALR, a carbon management plan has been developed. This will continue to evolve through the design stages and in time with the delivery of the link road, to fully understand and minimise carbon impacts and implement any required mitigation and benefits. This will also ensure that the long term maintenance burden of the link road is minimised.</p>
<p>5.8 Communications impact</p> <p>Does the report contain any information that has an impact on the council's communications activities?</p> <p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?</p> <p>The City Deal programme and the delivery of the Project will continue to be promoted through Corporate Communications and the Glasgow City Region's Communications team.</p> <p>In terms of East Airdrie Link Road, joint communication arrangements have been put in place between NHS Lanarkshire and North Lanarkshire Council to coordinate communication, stakeholder engagement and promote the projects as they develop.</p>
<p>5.9 Risk impact</p> <p>Is there a risk impact?</p> <p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the key risks and potential impacts, highlighting where the risk(s) are assessed and recorded (e.g. Corporate or Service or Project Risk Registers), and how they are managed?</p> <p>A key risk for the City Deal Programme is the current global economic climate and its short and long term impacts on the delivery of the city deal projects. This risk is becoming a live issue for the Programme and will be assessed and recorded within the City Deal Issues Register. This is not unique to City Deal and the approach to</p>

this risk and issue management will be carried out in conjunction with Finance and the Glasgow City Region Project Management Office.

Risk management of North Lanarkshire's City Deal activity is incorporated within the council's City Deal programme risk register which is reviewed by the City Deal Manager and reported to the council's City Deal Board.

The City Deal risks are also integrated in the Place Service Risk Register.

Each City Deal sub project has a detail risk register and is managed by the Project Manager. For East Airdrie Link Road, a joint Risk Register has been developed and is co owned by NHS L and NLC. Regular risk workshops take place to review and manage joint risks between the Monklands Replacement Hospital and the EALR. The joint Risk Register is reported to the Project Interface Board.

5.10 Armed Forces Covenant Duty

Does the report require to take due regard of the Armed Forces Covenant Duty (i.e. does it relate to healthcare, housing, or education services for in-Service or ex-Service personnel, or their families, or widow(er)s)?

Yes ☐ No ☒

If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the provision which has been made to ensure there has been appropriate consideration of the particular needs of the Armed Forces community to make sure that they do not face disadvantage compared to other citizens in the provision of public services.

5.11 Children's rights and wellbeing impact

Does the report contain any information regarding any council activity, service delivery, policy, or plan that has an impact on children and young people up to the age of 18, or on a specific group of these?

Yes ☐ No ☒

If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact and the provision that has been made to ensure there has been appropriate consideration of the relevant Articles from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

If Yes, has a Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment (CRWIA) been carried out?

Yes ☐ No ☐

North Lanarkshire Council Report

Policy and Strategy Committee

Does this report require to be approved?

☐ Yes ☒ No

Ref UKSPF/SD

Date

05/06/25

UK Shared Prosperity Fund – Annual Update 2024/25

From Pamela Humpries, Chief Officer (Place)

E-mail Weiry@northlan.gov.uk

Telephone

Yvonne Weir
07508 001238

Executive Summary

The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) provided £2.6bn of funding across the UK for local investment up to 31 March 2025. The North Lanarkshire allocation of UKSPF for this period was £13,871,047, providing a mix of capital and revenue funding for projects across the UKSPF's three investment priorities: Communities and Place; Support for Local Businesses and People and Skills, and an additional allocation for Multiply.

In line with UK Government requirements, the Council has submitted quarterly reports confirming the level of expenditure and the outputs and outcomes recorded and verified in the previous quarter. The final year-end report was submitted at the end of April 2025 and reported a cumulative spend of £13,233,213 for projects. The UKSPF Investment Plan also included an allowance for management and administration costs of up to 4%, which has been claimed in full.

The cumulative spend for the UKSPF Programme is therefore £13,788,054 representing full spend for the North Lanarkshire programme. The balance of funds was allocated to 2 regional projects managed by GCR. In addition to the above, the overspend in Multiply (£43,594) will also be reported and it is expected will be paid to North Lanarkshire from underspend elsewhere in the GCR programme.

As part of the UK Government's Autumn Budget Statement presented to Parliament on Thursday 30 October 2024, the Chancellor confirmed that UKSPF will continue for a Year 4 with a budget of £900m for the 12 month-period. The UKSPF allocation for North Lanarkshire for 2025/26 is £6,034,163. Proposals for the allocation of UKSPF for 2025/26 were developed by the UKPSF Board and were approved at Enterprise and Fair Work Committee on 14th February 2025.

Recommendations

It is recommended that Policy and Strategy Committee:

- (1) Acknowledges progress in implementing the Shared Prosperity Fund Investment Plan and that the programme drew down its full funding allocation of £13,788,054.
- (2) Acknowledges the range of activity and outcomes that the UKSPF has supported over the last three years as set out in section 3 of the report.

- (3) Notes that a further update will be provided in Cycle 2 2026 regarding delivery of the 2025/26 investment plan.

The Plan for North Lanarkshire

Priority	Improve economic opportunities and outcomes
Ambition statement	(21) Continue to identify and access opportunities to leverage additional resources to support our ambitions
Programme of Work	All Programmes of Work

1. Background

- 1.1 The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) provided £2.6bn of funding across the UK for local investment up to 31 March 2025. The funding was split over three financial years as follows: £400m for 2022-23, £700m for 2023-24 and ramping up to £1.5bn for 2024-25. All areas of the UK received a conditional allocation of funding based on a funding formula rather than direct competition for the funds. A total of £212m was allocated to Scotland (8.4% of the UK total).
- 1.2 This report provides an annual update in relation to the North Lanarkshire Investment Plan for the UKSPF which was approved by Enterprise, Growth and Fair Work Committee in August 2022. As reported previously North Lanarkshire's investment priorities, interventions, outputs and outcomes were submitted as part of the Glasgow City Region (GCR) UKSPF Investment Plan on 1st September 2022 and were subsequently approved by the UK Government on 5th December 2022. The North Lanarkshire allocation of UKSPF was £13,871,047, providing a mix of capital and revenue funding for projects across the UKSPF's three investment priorities: communities and place; support for local businesses and people and skills, and an additional allocation for Multiply. A UKSPF Project Board, chaired by the Chief Officer (Place) was established in February 2023 to oversee the UKSPF programme implementation and to ensure that the appropriate governance and reporting requirements are met.
- 1.3 Annual reports presented to this Committee in March 2023 and March 2024, provided a financial update on the 2022 – 2025 UKSPF programme and noted progress towards achieving the outputs and outcomes. This report sets out the position at the end of the end of the initial 3 year programme as at 31 March 2025 and an overview of the year 4 programme for 2025/26 which has recently been confirmed by the UK Government.

2. Report

- 2.1 As has been presented to Committee previously, the UKSPF Programme was delayed in starting and the funding was subsequently reprofiled. The final approved distribution of funds is set out in the table below:

Investment Priority	UKSPF 2022/23	UKSPF 2023/24	UKSPF 2024/25	TOTAL UKSPF
Communities & Place	£42,500	£795,427	£2,246,500	£3,084,427
Supporting Local Business	£0	£837,624	£1,667,738	£2,505,362
People and Skills	£136,000	£2,661,474	£3,072,976	£5,870,450
Multiply	£47,027	£923,766	£802,181	£1,772,974
NLC Management/Admin 4%	£25,671	£203,841	£325,329	£554,841
GCR led regional projects	£0	£64,492	£18,500	£82,992
TOTAL	£251,198	£5,486,624	£8,133,224	£13,871,046

- 2.2 The North Lanarkshire UKSPF Programme covered 21 interventions, with a total of 29 individual projects delivered over the duration of the programme through to March 2025. There was also a requirement for a minimum capital allocation of just under £2.1m which was allocated to support a range of active travel improvements, increased digital connectivity in community facilities and contributions to the redevelopment works at the Watersports Centre, Strathclyde Park and The Time Capsule, Coatbridge.
- 2.3 At the end of 2023/24, the UK Government confirmed underspend could be carried forward into year 3 of the programme (2024/25). Financial spend in 2023/24 was £3,492,196 resulting in the balance of £1,994,428 being carried forward into the following year. At that point each intervention and the projects being delivered retained the underspend to fund activities in 2024/25.
- 2.4 Throughout the Programme, the UKSPF Board has overseen progress of individual projects and ensured that delivery was on track. A number of projects encountered recruitment or procurement challenges leading to delays in activity starting, but all projects put in place mitigating actions to ensure that spend and progress towards outputs and outcomes would still be achieved as planned.
- 2.5 The UKSPF Board has delegated authority to approve financial changes both within and between approved interventions. As the programme reached its conclusion in March 2025, there was a need to move funds between interventions to maximise the funding drawn down by the Council. As a result, full spend was achieved as outlined in Appendix 1 of this report.

Reporting to GCR and UK Government

- 2.6 The UK Government require formal reporting on a 6-monthly basis at the end of September and the end of March each year. This includes detailed questions about projects, outputs, outcomes and expenditure. The reports submitted to the UK Government relate to the regional investment plan, with information from the 8 member authorities submitted to the Glasgow City Region (GCR) Programme Monitoring Office (PMO) and thereafter collated into a GCR report that is considered by the Finance Strategy Group and approved by the GCR Cabinet prior to submission.

- 2.7 The final year-end report was submitted at the end of April 2025. Based on the spend noted in Appendix 1 the year end return to GCR/UK Government reported a cumulative spend of £13,233,213 for projects. The UKSPF Investment Plan also includes an allowance for management and administration costs of up to 4%, which has been claimed in full - £554,841.
- 2.8 The cumulative spend for the UKSPF Programme is therefore £13,788,054 representing full spend for the North Lanarkshire programme. The balance of funds was allocated to 2 regional projects managed by GCR.
- 2.9 In addition to the above, the Multiply overspend will also be reported and it is expected this will be paid to the council from underspend elsewhere in the GCR programme.

Evaluation

- 2.10 The Council was invited to take part in 2 evaluation studies as part of its UKSPF delivery. The first is an intervention level evaluation exercise looking at how business support activities have been delivered in 4 areas across the UK. North Lanarkshire, along with Cardiff, Cornwall and Northern Ireland have taken part in the evaluation which has involved a review of business grants including interviews with staff administering the grants and a survey of businesses who have applied for support. The evaluation is currently in the final phase of gathering information and the report should be circulated in the autumn.
- 2.11 The second evaluation is a place based evaluation looking more widely at the Glasgow City region programme. This has involved looking at the management and delivery of the UKSPF programme at a regional level, complemented by a more detailed look at a sample of individual projects delivered by member authorities. For North Lanarkshire the project selected was the Expert Help provision and as above will involve a review of the service and a survey of businesses who have applied for support.

UKSPF 2025/26

- 2.12 As part of the UK Government's Autumn Budget Statement presented to Parliament on Thursday 30 October 2024, the Chancellor confirmed that UKSPF will continue for a Year 4 with a budget of £900m for the 12 month-period. The UKSPF allocation for North Lanarkshire for 2025/26 is £6,034,163.
- 2.13 Proposals for the allocation of UKSPF for 2025/26 were developed by the UKSPF Board and were approved at Enterprise and Fair Work Committee on 14th February 2025. The distribution across the investment themes approved at Committee is set out in the table below with the allocation to projects under each of the priority themes and subthemes provided in Appendix 2, including the allocation of 4% of the programme to meet management and administration costs.

Priority	Year 4 Allocation
Capital (Communities and Place)	£1,405,960
Communities and Place	£485,000
Local Business Support	£1,015,000
People and Skills	£2,886,837
Multiply	
Management and Administration	£241,366
Total	£6,034,163

- 2.14 As 2025/26 is seen as a transition year, most projects are continuing with similar activities to those supported in the 2022-25 period, albeit on a reduced basis to reflect the lower level of funding available. As with the original programme there is a requirement for a minimum capital spend which has been confirmed as £1,408,699. This will be allocated to support the redevelopment of The Watersports Centre at Strathclyde Country Park.

3. Measures of success

- 3.1 The UKSPF Investment Plan initially set out targets across a range of outputs and outcomes and progress towards these is reported as part of each 6-month report. To date output/ outcome reports have been submitted up to the end of September 2023, March 2024 and September 2024. These reported primarily on progress against many of the outputs as it was still early in the delivery of most interventions to be able to achieve and record outcomes.
- 3.2 The year-end report submitted to GCR at March 2025 provided the latest position in relation to outputs and outcomes. The progress towards meeting output and outcome targets continues to be variable due to the recent completion of capital projects and the time lags for the achievement of outcomes in many of the interventions which are recorded between 6 months and a year after the support has been provided.
- 3.3 Of the 30 outputs and outcomes approved across the communities and place theme, 15 have been fully achieved at the end of March 2025, with most of the others making good progress. Highlights include:
- 235 organisations received grants to support local and volunteering projects, with a further 82 organisations receiving non-financial support
 - 44 local amenities or facilities have been improved, including 30 with improved digital connectivity
 - 2km of cycleway have been created to support active travel
 - 164 volunteering opportunities have been created
- 3.4 Under local business support, more demand for growth grants which are for a higher level of funding led to fewer grants being awarded overall. Despite this, 4 out of 9 outcomes have achieved their target with further reporting expected for those grants only completing activity at the end of the programme. Key highlights include:
- 199 enterprises receiving grants, with a further 302 receiving non-financial support
 - 161 potential entrepreneurs assisted to be business ready
 - 28 new enterprises created as a direct result of support
 - private investment of £1,657,280 levered in to support activities
 - 17,172 additional visitors making use of improvements to amenities and facilities supported through the Tourism Challenge Fund
- 3.5 The people and skills theme has seen investment in pilot activities to support particularly vulnerable groups alongside continuing employability activity. In particular, UKSPF has funded programmes to support vulnerable young people in vocational training areas to increase their opportunities on leaving school. The outcomes for this theme take longer to come to realisation and will continue to be gathered and reported in 2025/26, but highlights include the following:
- 165 economically inactive individuals have engaged with keyworker support

- 213 young people have been supported to take part in work experience programmes
 - 1,525 individuals have been supported to complete a course or gain a qualification
 - 1,194 people have been supported into employment
 - 886 individuals have engaged in development of life skills, including digital skills
- 3.6 The intention of the Multiply interventions has been to engage with learners and to increase their confidence in using numbers, particularly where this is creating barriers for the individual in everyday life. Engagement activities have been very successful, but most of the beneficiaries have not yet reached the level of achieving formal Maths qualifications. The key highlights are:
- 1842 people have participated in Multiply courses
 - 191 adult numeracy courses have been run in local areas
 - 292 adults have achieved a maths qualification up to SQA level 5
- 3.7 To illustrate the impact that UKSPF has made, appendix 3 includes stories from the individuals benefiting from four of the UKSPF projects.

4. Supporting documentation

- 4.1 The UKSPF prospectus can be viewed at: [UK Shared Prosperity Fund: prospectus - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/674442/UKSPF_prospectus.pdf)
- 4.2 UK Shared Prosperity Fund 2025-26: Technical Note can be viewed at: [UK Shared Prosperity Fund 2025-26: Technical note - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/674442/UKSPF_Technical_Note.pdf)
- 4.3 A link to the GCR Investment Plan summary can be viewed at: [UK Shared Prosperity Fund Investment Plan \(glasgowcityregion.co.uk\)](https://glasgowcityregion.co.uk/gcr-investment-plan/)
- 4.4 UK Shared Prosperity Fund – Update, Policy and Strategy Committee, 14th March 2024 - [Document.ashx](#)

Appendix 1: North Lanarkshire Investment Plan Projects – final spend position

Appendix 2: Shared Prosperity Fund Allocations 2025/26

Appendix 3: Case Studies



Pamela Humphries
Chief Officer (Place)

5. Impacts

5.1 Public Sector Equality Duty and Fairer Scotland Duty
Does the report contain information that has an impact as a result of the Public Sector Equality Duty and/or Fairer Scotland Duty?
Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?
<i>The overall aim of the UKPSF is to build pride in place and increase life chances. The impact will therefore be positive across a number of equality groups with many projects targeted as particularly vulnerable groups. A full EQIA has been completed.</i>
If Yes, has an assessment been carried out and published on the council's website? https://www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/your-community/equalities/equality-and-fairer-scotland-duty-impact-assessments
Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
5.2 Financial impact
Does the report contain any financial impacts?
Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, have all relevant financial impacts been discussed and agreed with Finance?
Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?
<i>The UKSPF has brought in just under £14m investment into North Lanarkshire to date with a further £6m allocated for 2025/26 - be distributed across the investment themes of communities and place, local support for businesses and people and skills. An Assurance Framework has been approved to provide guidance for project officers delivering UKPSF funded activities to ensure appropriate compliance and verification is in place.</i>
5.3 HR policy impact
Does the report contain any HR policy or procedure impacts?
Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, have all relevant HR impacts been discussed and agreed with People Resources?
Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?
<i>A number of projects have recruited additional staff on temporary contracts. Each Service will/has discussed people resource requirements with the relevant contacts and sought approvals as necessary.</i>
5.4 Legal impact
Does the report contain any legal impacts (such as general legal matters, statutory considerations (including employment law considerations), or new legislation)?
Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, have all relevant legal impacts been discussed and agreed with Legal and Democratic?
Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?

A grant offer letter and passdown agreement for the UKSPF is in place between Glasgow City Region (as lead authority for the investment plan) and North Lanarkshire Council. The current passdown agreement will be updated to March 2026 following receipt of the grant offer letter for 2025/26 from the UK Government.

5.5 Data protection impact

Does the report / project / practice contain or involve the processing of personal data?

Yes ☒ No ☐

If Yes, is the processing of this personal data likely to result in a high risk to the data subject?

Yes ☐ No ☒

If Yes, has a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) been carried out and e-mailed to dataprotection@northlan.gov.uk

Yes ☒ No ☐

A DPIA and Privacy notices are in place for UKSPF interventions where required.

5.6 Technology / Digital impact

Does the report contain information that has an impact on either technology, digital transformation, service redesign / business change processes, data management, or connectivity / broadband / Wi-Fi?

Yes ☐ No ☒

If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?

Where the impact identifies a requirement for significant technology change, has an assessment been carried out (or is scheduled to be carried out) by the Enterprise Architecture Governance Group (EAGG)?

Yes ☐ No ☐

5.7 Environmental / Carbon impact

Does the report / project / practice contain information that has an impact on any environmental or carbon matters?

Yes ☐ No ☒

If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?

5.8 Communications impact

Does the report contain any information that has an impact on the council's communications activities?

Yes ☒ No ☐

If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?

There is a requirement to acknowledge that activities supported through the UKPSF are funded or part funded by the UK Government. Branding guidelines have been made available to all project leads and Corporate Communications Team are available to provide advice and guidance.

5.9 Risk impact

Is there a risk impact?

Yes ☒ No ☐

If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the key risks and potential impacts, highlighting where the risk(s) are assessed and recorded (e.g. Corporate or Service or Project Risk Registers), and how they are managed?

Management of the UKPSF is following the Council's project management framework and a position risk assessment has been undertaken and a risk and issues log developed to support management of the programme. This is reviewed by the UKSPF Board at least 6 monthly.

5.10 Armed Forces Covenant Duty

Does the report require to take due regard of the Armed Forces Covenant Duty (i.e. does it relate to healthcare, housing, or education services for in-Service or ex-Service personnel, or their families, or widow(er)s)?

Yes ☐ No ☒

If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the provision which has been made to ensure there has been appropriate consideration of the particular needs of the Armed Forces community to make sure that they do not face disadvantage compared to other citizens in the provision of public services.

5.11 Children's rights and wellbeing impact

Does the report contain any information regarding any council activity, service delivery, policy, or plan that has an impact on children and young people up to the age of 18, or on a specific group of these?

Yes ☒ No ☐

If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact and the provision that has been made to ensure there has been appropriate consideration of the relevant Articles from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

UKSPF will deliver an education and skills programme of activities targeted at vulnerable young people preparing to leave school. This will build on the existing provision in place to support those with additional support needs and through the Pathways programme with a specific focus on vocational training and life skills. This will contribute to Article 29 – goals of education.

If Yes, has a Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment (CRWIA) been carried out?

Yes ☐ No ☒

Appendix 1: North Lanarkshire Investment Plan Projects – final spend position

Project Spend – Communities and Place	
Project	Spend to Mar 2025
S2 – Strathclyde Park Watersports Centre	400,000
S5 – Bellshill Pump Track Lighting	42,500
S5 – Community Facilities	727,237
S6 – Ravenscraig Active Travel Project	250,000
S6 – Active Travel Projects	299,514
S7 – Tourism Campaigns	109,281
S8 – Volunteering Hub	211,068
S9 – Community Funds	702,765
S10 – Fuel Poverty	120,000
S11 – Feasibility Studies	86,500
S12 – Digital Connectivity Challenge Fund	135,562
TOTAL	3,084,427

Project Spend – Local Business Support	
Project	Spend to Mar 2025
S14 – Tourism Challenge Fund	86,545
S15 – Business Grants	£1,298,499
S15 – Smart Hub Lanarkshire	£233,261
S19 – BAME	£142,210
S19 – Women in Business	£146,459
S20 – Expert Help	£212,878
S20 – Net Zero Challenge Fund	£190,637
S22 Social Enterprise Support	£194,873
TOTAL	£2,505,362

Project Spend – People and Skills	
Project	Spend to Mar 2025
S31 – Employability Support	748,378
S35 – North Lanarkshire's Working	2,874,916
S35 - Young Adult Offer	65,915
S36 – Built Environment Skills Academy	728,027
S38 – Digital Skills Academy	469,737
S39 – Enhanced Pathways	449,436
S39 – Enhanced Additional Support Needs Provision	306,363
S39 - In-school Pathways	227,682
TOTAL	5,870,454

Project Spend – Multiply	
Project	Spend to Mar 2025
S42 – Integrated Maths in the Community	1,537,508
S49 Financial Literacy programmes	279,055
TOTAL	1,816,563

Appendix 2 - Shared Prosperity Fund Project Allocations 2025/26

Communities and Place	
Thriving Places – development of visitor economy	
Visitor Campaigns – Visit Lanarkshire	40,000
Healthy, Safe and Inclusive Communities – improve health and wellbeing	
Watersports Centre, Strathclyde Country Park (capital)	1,408,699
Impactful Volunteering – Volunteer NL	85,000
Healthy, Safe and Inclusive Communities – bringing communities together	
Investment in Capacity Building – Community Empowerment NL	360,000
Local Business Support	
Advice and Support to Businesses	
SME Development Grants and Support – Small Business Grants	75,000
SME Development Grants and Support – Business Growth Grants	572,260
SME Development Grants and Support - Smart Hub Lanarkshire	50,000
Expert Help	175,000
Enterprise Culture and Start up Support	
Strengthening Entrepreneurial support – BAME Entrepreneurs	50,000
Strengthening Entrepreneurial support – Female Entrepreneurs	50,000
Social Enterprise Support	40,000
People and Skills	
Supporting people to progress towards and into employment	
North Lanarkshire's Working	1,568,837
Support for young people who are or at risk of being NEET	
Vocational training support for vulnerable leaving school	250,000
Employment Related Skills	
NL Built Environment Academy	230,000
Essential Skills (including numeracy, literacy, ESOL and digital)	
NL Digital Skills Academy	224,000
Multiply - Sum it Up	496,000
Multiply - Managing Your Money	118,000
Management and Administration (4%)	241,367

Appendix 3 - UKSPF Case studies

S8: Volunteering NL	£211,068
Support to develop and enhance volunteering opportunities in North Lanarkshire. The project sought to engage volunteers across a range of roles within NLC and offer wider support to volunteers operating in voluntary and community groups through a Volunteer Hub. Some funding each year was distributed to local groups through a challenge fund.	

North Lanarkshire Befriending Project
A Report for the North Lanarkshire Challenge Fund

In October 2024, we were grateful to receive £1,500 from the North Lanarkshire Challenge Fund to provide additional travel expenses for Volunteers on our Befriending project. Thanks to this funding, we have been able to offer more opportunities for Young Carers and their Befrienders to participate in activities, providing respite for Young Carers.

North Lanarkshire Befriending Project

Our project provides invaluable emotional, practical and social support for young people aged 8-18 who have a caring responsibility at home. Young Carers are referred from schools or partners (e.g., third sector partners). They can be referred for various reasons, including non-attainment, stress, and lack of confidence.

We recruit, train and support Befrienders (aged 18+) who choose to invest time in the community supporting children to take a break from their challenging home lives. Befrienders act as a consistent and trustworthy role model. They build a safe and supportive relationship with a young person by spending time with them and undertaking fun and engaging social and leisure activities whilst providing a listening ear, space and time out. Each young person is provided with bespoke support and guidance tailored to their needs, goals and interests.

Young people develop their social, people and communication skills, confidence and self-esteem, building levels of resilience and sense of inclusion, with support around healthy relationships, positive mental health, community participation and personal safety.

Impact

North Lanarkshire Befriending Project provides vital support and respite to Young Carers across the region who could benefit from some Befriender support.

We achieved our target of supporting 15 Young Carers in 24/25, of which 13 maintained engagement with the project for the full year.



Due to your support over the last six months, we have been able to provide more activities for Young Carers and Befrienders to do together. Over this period, each match has been able to complete between 24-32 sessions where Young Carers are free from responsibility and can feel like young people again.

“The most rewarding aspect of the Befriending Project is the relationship I’ve built with my young person. From day one my young person was understandably, quite sceptical but as time has progressed, she has become more comfortable with me and often starts the conversations herself telling me about her week. I feel as though I have gained a lot of confidence during my time with my young person as her mother often tells me how excited she is when she knows I am coming to get her. This has made me aware of how just 2 hours out of my day means a lot to her. -Befriender, 20

“My match always appears to be quite shy when I first pick him up, but after we get to the venue, he opens up a lot and afterwards says how he had fun. He’s very hyperactive, but I like that I’m able to give him some outlets for his energy and is able to do what he wants to do, and not just sit still and be quiet. For me, allowing him to be a young person in an appropriate environment is what I enjoy doing - and I hope it is helping him too.

He does not have a lot of money for himself, and he is getting to go places he has not been before. The climbing wall and flip out has been his favourite so far. My match has a lot of responsibility at home and just needs to be a kid for a few hours. He is 15 and takes on a lot for dad and younger sisters. -Befriender, 39

S12: Digital Connectivity	£135,562
UKSPF provided capital investment for digital infrastructure in community facilities across North Lanarkshire. Part of the funding supported enhancing public Wi-Fi in 21 NLC community facilities with a complementary programme delivered through a challenge fund, providing grants directly to community groups managing their own facilities. The third element was to fund the equipment to develop the immersive space at Airdrie Library.	

Digital Connectivity Award Story

Orbiston Neighbourhood Centre

Based in Bellshill, an integral part of the community where essential services are operated such as NHS digital appointments and working with Bellshill Job Centre. ONC also offer their facility to key community groups such as Scouts and Men's Group.

The problem

- Groups using the facility rely on the IT infrastructure to serve the community and cannot run their groups successfully with the current digital provision at the centre.
- The aging IT infrastructure is no longer able to handle the daily high demand required.

Benefits of funding

- Funding will allow the centre to run and develop their current groups and expand to include more users.
- Now able to offer community groups more days within ONC that will attract further members benefitting the wider community.
- Local community groups could incorporate the new upgraded technology as part of the groups services, offering a wider range of activities available.

Result of Digital Connectivity funding

- An award of £4819.97 for the installation of wireless access points and the sufficient cabling and associated technology.
- Improved infrastructure has resulted in a better quality of connectivity for local groups and partnership agencies where digital connection is crucial for the community.
- Essential groups such as Men's Group can include digital and online activities to support Dementia patients with memory stimulus etc.

Quote

"The Digital Connectivity Fund award has also helped further our Digital Inclusion group to include more people and to allow us to expand our days. This has become a vital service for the local community."

S15: Business Grants	£1,298,499
The business grant funds supported the establishment and growth of new and existing businesses in North Lanarkshire, complementing the wider business support available through the Enterprise Development Team and Business Gateway. Delivery was through 3 schemes aimed at start-up businesses, small and self-employed businesses and the business growth fund.	

A Business Growth Fund grant of £27,984 enabled AquaTitans to create a purpose-built workspace and storage in their Cumbernauld premises to service new contracts.

The company specialises in the design and production of electrical equipment and components for submersibles, including specialist fabrication, machining and tooling, electrical testing and rapid prototyping.

The new facilities are allowing the business to expand into work on new and innovative submersible build projects. This will help increase turnover by up to £3million over the next two years and create at least two extra full-time high-skilled engineering positions.

By improving overall efficiency and competitiveness, the workspace will likely lead to other future contract opportunities from global submersible operators.

As part of the Business Growth Fund community benefits agreement, AquaTitans will offer work experience opportunities for local young people, provide mentoring support to other SMEs and microbusinesses in supply chain opportunities, and support business-education partnerships.

Alongside the grant funding, the company is also accessing Business Gateway Lanarkshire support via the Growth Advisory Service. This has included fully funded consultancy support through the Expert Help programme to work on the business strategy.

Alan Green, Director of AquaTitans, said: "The infrastructure improvements, completed with support from the Business Growth Fund, have had a transformational impact on our in-house production capabilities. We have several projects underway and this is an important step in the evolution of AquaTitans."

S31: Working Matters	£748,378
The Working Matters programme provided place based employability support for economically inactive residents of North Lanarkshire with intensive and wrap-around support to move those furthest from the labour market closer to mainstream provision and employment, supplemented by additional and/or specialist life and basic skills.	

Donna's Story

By her own admission, Donna is shy. Through the S31 Working Matters project she was able to access Routes To Work's BOOST events and regular keyworker support and she quickly came out of her shell to take on the role of "leader of the gang".

Donna, from Coatbridge, knew she needed support with her mental health, motivation and some issues surrounding anger and frustration. She had been economically inactive and out of work for 10 years. Attending the BOOST events - which took place every Wednesday for four weeks at the Time Capsule - Donna's confidence quickly improved.

She said: "I had a great interaction with everybody, the group was great. At the beginning, everyone was dubious to go in because you didn't know anybody, but when we all got in and found out a bit more about what it's about as our Keyworker Eddie explained it all to us. It was really insightful.

"I did mindfulness, an anxiety workshop and wellness. We covered loads and loads of stuff. We had somebody from North Lanarkshire Council in and found out about different events and courses that were coming up. It helped me with my temper, anxiety and frustration. It gave you that wee inlet to stop and think before you react. There's always a positive out of a negative."

Local partners like North Lanarkshire Leisure and the NHS North Lanarkshire Mental Health team were also brought in to discuss topics like physical fitness, anxiety and holistic therapy. Donna's mental health and anger issues abated, and she worked on her physical health with a gym membership. Donna also undertook a REHIS qualification in emergency first aid at work and within a week - remarkably - she saved her neighbour's life. Donna was also supported with looking at jobs within the care sector which would fit around the support she provides to her mother.

She added: "I think everybody's noticed a change in me. I've got more confidence, I'm not as, like, held in. I can talk about stuff better rather than not wanting to talk. Now I can do it because I want to. Through the support given by Eddie and Routes to Work, I feel my employability skills have improved, and my goal is that once I've got my health in order, to get a full-time job."

North Lanarkshire Council Report

Policy and Strategy Committee

Does this report require to be approved? ☐ Yes ☒ No

Ref GT

Date 05/06/25

Accounts Commission Briefing – Local Government Budgets 2025/26

From Greg Telfer, Chief Officer (Finance & Technology)

E-mail telferg@northlan.gov.uk

Telephone 07583 010692

Executive Summary

The Accounts Commission published its annual briefing note on local government budgets on 22 May 2025. This is an important independent document summarising the state of play for local government finances.

The report highlights that despite record Scottish Government funding for local government in 2025/26, councils continue to face recurring pressures in excess of funding uplifts, such as inflation, annual pay deals and growing demand for services. The report states that increased funding is largely in support of previously agreed national commitments. At the time of setting budgets councils collectively identified a budget gap of £647 million in 2025/26 requiring increasing to Council Tax, savings, use of reserves and increasing charges for services to set balanced budgets.

The report provides a number of Accounts Commission expectations in the presentation of budget information to elected members and residents. The Council will continue to ensure budget information meets those expectations.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Policy and Strategy Committee:

- (1) Reviews and acknowledges the content of the report and the Accounts Commission's briefing note on local government budgets for 2025/26.

The Plan for North Lanarkshire

Priority All priorities

Ambition statement All ambition statements

Programme of Work Statutory / corporate / service requirement

1. Background

- 1.1 Audit Scotland has prepared the briefing on behalf of the Accounts Commission to summarise key information arising from an analysis of the 2025/26 budgets recently agreed by Scotland's councils.

- 1.2 The information has been gathered following a data capturing exercise across all councils including gathering information on budget gaps, how budget gaps have been mitigated, fees and charges, and any savings implemented.
- 1.3 Members will recall that the Council set its budget on 20 February 2025 with an approved Council Tax rise of 10% which meant that no additional savings were required to balance the budget.

2. Report

- 2.1 The Accounts Commission briefing note can be accessed on the following link: [Briefing: Local government budgets 2024/25](#)
- 2.2 Key messages include:
- Despite funding for local government increasing by 6% in real terms, councils continue to face recurring cost pressures in excess of funding uplifts, including inflation, pay (including employer's National Insurance contribution rates) and growing demand for services. The report also highlights that most of the increased settlement will be used to deliver previously agreed national commitments rather than cost pressures faced by councils.
 - When settling their budgets councils collectively identified a difference of £647m between anticipated expenditure and funding and income they will receive. A range of actions have been identified to close this budget gap including Council Tax rises, savings, use of services and increasing charges for accessing services.
 - Despite continuing to make savings year on year to address financial challenges, councils still forecast more will need to be done to achieve financial sustainability given the ongoing projected increases in costs and increases in service demand.
- 2.3 The Accounts Commission has made a number of expectations of councils in relation to the availability of information being publicly available within budget papers. They expect councils to clearly set out:
- The annual revenue budget, comprising funding and income, prior to savings and other bridging actions,
 - The associated budget gap, prior to bridging actions such as savings and use of reserves,
 - The savings plan, clearly setting out the split between recurring and non-recurring actions,
 - Projected revenue budget gaps, both annual and cumulative, and
 - The assumptions used in calculating projected budget gaps.
- 2.4 The Council's approach to determining its anticipated budget gap through the Medium Term Financial Plan, further Financial Outlook updates and the production of the annual budget report in February each year provides all this information to both elected members and residents of North Lanarkshire.

3. Measures of success

- 3.1 The Council's overall budget strategy will ensure solutions are developed aligned to the Council's strategic objectives outlined in the Plan for North Lanarkshire.
- 3.2 Information presented to elected members during the budget process will support the delivery of a balanced budget for 2026/27 and beyond.
-

4. Supporting documentation

4.1 [Accounts Commission Briefing: Local government budgets 2024/25](#)



Greg Telfer
Chief Officer (Finance & Technology)

5. Impacts

5.1	<p>Public Sector Equality Duty and Fairer Scotland Duty Does the report contain information that has an impact as a result of the Public Sector Equality Duty and/or Fairer Scotland Duty? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?</p> <p>If Yes, has an assessment been carried out and published on the council's website? https://www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/your-community/equalities/equality-and-fairer-scotland-duty-impact-assessments Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p>
5.2	<p>Financial impact Does the report contain any financial impacts? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If Yes, have all relevant financial impacts been discussed and agreed with Finance? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?</p>
5.3	<p>HR policy impact Does the report contain any HR policy or procedure impacts? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If Yes, have all relevant HR impacts been discussed and agreed with People Resources? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?</p>
5.4	<p>Legal impact Does the report contain any legal impacts (such as general legal matters, statutory considerations (including employment law considerations), or new legislation)? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If Yes, have all relevant legal impacts been discussed and agreed with Legal and Democratic? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?</p>
5.5	<p>Data protection impact Does the report / project / practice contain or involve the processing of personal data? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If Yes, is the processing of this personal data likely to result in a high risk to the data subject? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If Yes, has a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) been carried out and e-mailed to dataprotection@northlan.gov.uk Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p>
5.6	<p>Technology / Digital impact Does the report contain information that has an impact on either technology, digital transformation, service redesign / business change processes, data management, or connectivity / broadband / Wi-Fi? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?</p>

<p>Where the impact identifies a requirement for significant technology change, has an assessment been carried out (or is scheduled to be carried out) by the Enterprise Architecture Governance Group (EAGG)?</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>5.7 Environmental / Carbon impact</p> <p>Does the report / project / practice contain information that has an impact on any environmental or carbon matters?</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?</p>
<p>5.8 Communications impact</p> <p>Does the report contain any information that has an impact on the council's communications activities?</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?</p>
<p>5.9 Risk impact</p> <p>Is there a risk impact?</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the key risks and potential impacts, highlighting where the risk(s) are assessed and recorded (e.g. Corporate or Service or Project Risk Registers), and how they are managed?</p>
<p>5.10 Armed Forces Covenant Duty</p> <p>Does the report require to take due regard of the Armed Forces Covenant Duty (i.e. does it relate to healthcare, housing, or education services for in-Service or ex-Service personnel, or their families, or widow(er)s)?</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the provision which has been made to ensure there has been appropriate consideration of the particular needs of the Armed Forces community to make sure that they do not face disadvantage compared to other citizens in the provision of public services.</p>
<p>5.11 Children's rights and wellbeing impact</p> <p>Does the report contain any information regarding any council activity, service delivery, policy, or plan that has an impact on children and young people up to the age of 18, or on a specific group of these?</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact and the provision that has been made to ensure there has been appropriate consideration of the relevant Articles from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).</p> <p>If Yes, has a Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment (CRWIA) been carried out?</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p>

North Lanarkshire Council Report

Policy and Strategy Committee

Does this report require to be approved?

☒ Yes ☐ No

Ref

GT/VR/FC

Date

05/06/25

5 Year Medium Term Financial Plan 2026/27 to 2030/31

From Greg Telfer, Chief Officer (Finance and Technology)

E-mail TelferG@northlan.gov.uk

Telephone

Executive Summary

This report provides an update on the five-year medium term financial forecast to 2030/31, which will be kept under review with further updated Financial Outlooks reported in line with the Revenue Budget Framework outlined in the report. The report outlines the challenges faced by the Council in maintaining medium term financial stability, whilst achieving the strategic priorities of the Council.

Taking the approved 2025/26 budget as the new baseline, this plan updates on the key financial planning assumptions focussing on those factors which have the greatest potential to impact the Council's forecast financial position in the medium term. This includes future revenue grant funding, pay and non-pay inflation. A range of risk-based scenarios have been considered, resulting in envisaged, pessimistic and optimistic positions, as set out in Appendices 1 to 3. Whilst the envisaged scenario remains the most appropriate for planning purposes, it is important to note the budget gap range, reflecting other potential scenarios the Council may face.

Table 1 below includes the optimistic and pessimistic scenarios and demonstrates the volatility and the extent of the fluctuation possible over the period of this plan. The summary forecast envisaged position, indicates a budget gap of £136.927 million over the planning period and £85.949 million for the three-year budget period, 2026/27 to 2028/29. Reflecting the other planning scenarios, the budget gap is estimated to range between £64.852 million and £263.691 million over the five-year period, and £42.034 million and £157.487 million over three years. This position is prior to any consideration of Council Tax increases, additional savings or other potential solutions to manage the position.

Table 1

Financial Year	Budget Gap Optimistic £000	Budget Gap Envisaged £000	Budget Gap Pessimistic £000
2026/27	17,201	34,638	53,675
2027/28	12,750	25,956	51,568
2028/29	12,083	25,355	52,245
2029/30	12,592	26,063	53,832
2030/31	10,226	24,915	52,372
Total	64,852	136,927	263,691
3 Year Gap	42,034	85,949	157,487

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Policy and Strategy Committee:

- (1) Approves the updated Medium Term Financial Plan 2026/27 to 2030/31.
 - (2) Recognises this plan will be subject to ongoing review with updates reported as outlined in the Revenue Budget Framework.
 - (3) Acknowledges the Revenue Budget Framework to manage the three-year forecast financial position outlined in the MTFP, which will facilitate the identification of sustainable solutions by the Council in meeting its statutory obligation to set a balanced budget.
-

The Plan for North Lanarkshire

Priority	All priorities
Ambition statement	(25) Ensure intelligent use of data and information to support fully evidence based decision making and future planning
Programme of Work	All Programmes of Work

1. Background

- 1.1. Members will appreciate longer term planning is integral to the Council's Financial Strategy and the strategic approach to budgeting. Effective decision making relies on robust financial planning and the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) assists in ensuring resources are aligned to the key priorities outlined in The Plan for North Lanarkshire are affordable and sustainable.
- 1.2. The MTFP reflects the financial risks that may impact on the Council's ability to continue to provide high quality services focussing on the strategic priorities, whilst balancing the budget. Therefore, this plan continues to consider a range of scenarios and highlights the associated forecast budget position. Taking the 2025/26 approved budget position as the new baseline, key financial planning assumptions have been reviewed and updated and are reflected in this plan. A range of risk-based outcomes continued to be modelled highlighting optimistic, envisaged and pessimistic scenarios.
- 1.3. The two main variables with the greatest potential to impact the forecast financial plan and the Council's ability to set a balanced budget are the level of funding provided by the Scottish Government and pay inflation. The latest Economic Forecast by the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) anticipates that whilst inflation will rise during 2025, it

is expected that it will fall back to target of 2% from 2027 on the basis that energy prices decline, food inflation decreases and wage growth settles.

- 1.4. This plan continues to recognise the risks and volatility in forecasting the potential financial implications. Therefore, whilst the envisaged scenario remains the most appropriate for planning purposes, the budget gap range across the potential scenarios demonstrate the volatility and the extent of the fluctuation possible over the period of the plan.
 - 1.5. Continuing practice in previous years, the MTFP budget gap excludes the anticipated cost pressures in relation to Adult Health and Social Care (AHSC) and the Housing Revenue Account as the IJB and HRA continue to prepare and develop their own robust financial plans and budget strategies to support their financial sustainability over the medium term. However, to ensure ongoing Elected Member visibility of the pressures facing AHSC this paper includes a high-level summary of the most recent financial plan approved by the IJB.
 - 1.6. The HRA has aligned their financial planning processes with the Council's, introducing a rolling 5 medium term financial plan in 2024/25. This outlines the challenges faced by the HRA in maintaining medium term financial sustainability whilst achieving its desired service ambitions.
 - 1.7. The IJB approved their MTFP 2025-2028 including the Long-Term Outlook 2025-2035 in March 2025. This highlighted the importance of IJB focusing on the longer-term financial challenges and to generate reserves where appropriate to assist in managing required savings and service redesign, ensuring the needs of service users and their families are met. The Council's Section 95 officer and the Chief Finance Officer (Section 95 Officer) of the IJB continue to work closely to ensure the Council has oversight of the financial position and work towards aligning budget strategies and planning periods.
 - 1.8. It should be noted that a five-year medium-term plan continues to remain reasonable and appropriate for financial planning purposes.
 - 1.9. A Revenue Budget Framework to support the delivery of a balanced budget for 2026/27 is also provided.
-

2. Report

- 2.1 The previous MTFP approved by this Committee in June 2024 indicated a three year gap for the period 2026/27 to 2028/29 of £59.484 million (2026/27, £21.320 million, 2027/28 £19.095 million and 2028/29 £19.433 million). This position is updated for the approved 2025/26 budget decisions along with other relevant key changes, whilst recognising the impact these may have on the demand for services, resources, and other cost pressures.
- 2.2 Appendices 1 to 3 provide summaries for three planning scenarios across the five year planning period, highlighting the anticipated budget gap for the three year budget period 2026/27 to 2028/29. Whilst three planning scenarios have been presented reflecting sensitivities and volatility in forecasting, the remainder of this report primarily focuses on assumptions in relation to the envisaged scenario. These are outlined below, with a summary of the movements since the previous plan provided at Appendix 4.

Forecast Resources

- 2.3 The largest element of the Scottish Budget is the Scottish Block Grant provided by the UK Government through the Barnett formula. The UK Spending Review is the process by which the UK Government sets out its plans for public spending. This provides vital information for the Scottish Government's planning assumptions and budget. The Spring Statement in March 2025 provided an update on the economy. Based on the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) forecasts, inflation is expected to be higher than previously projected during 2025 with a gradual return to the Bank of England's target of 2% by 2027. Whilst no date has been set for the next spending review, it is expected to take place in the Autumn.

Aggregate External Finance (AEF)

- 2.4 The Council's revenue funding consists largely of government funding, Aggregate External Finance (AEF) equates to approximately 83% of total funding and is made up of General Revenue Grant based on the Scottish Government's assessment of overall spending needs, Specific Grant and Non-Domestic Rates Income.
- 2.5 Estimating future years' funding with any degree of certainty is challenging, and a slight variation on funding level can have a significant impact (1% equates to more than £9.000 million) on the Council's forecast financial position.
- 2.6 The Scottish Government published its Resource Spending Review in May 2022, which set out high level parameters for future Scottish budgets up to 2026/27. This confirmed a flat lining of resource funding for Local Government at 2022/23 levels, to 2025/26, with a small increase forecast in 2026/27. In addition, in May 2023, the Scottish Government published its updated Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for the period from 2023/24 to 2027/28, providing insight to future funding and spending priorities at a national level. Whilst there was no update to the MTFS in 2024, the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government has also now confirmed that the 2025 MTFS update and accompanying Fiscal Sustainability Delivery Plan (FSDP) will be delayed until 23 June. However, based on the most likely scenario, the most recent version of MTFS available indicates increasing taxation, block grant and other revenues over the period to 2027/28, funding is not forecast to keep pace with expenditure demands. Therefore, it is anticipated that the Scottish Government will continue to have to make difficult and prioritised spending decisions across the full period covered by their MTFS. Given that Local Government is unlikely to be prioritised as part of the Scottish Government's budget decisions, there is an increasing risk to the previous flat cash commitment.
- 2.7 Nonetheless, there is no clarity over this position nor the funding at individual Council level, or whether this funding will come with additional spending commitments. In the absence of any further updates this plan continues to assume a flat lining of government funding. All three scenarios have been re-baselined to reflect the 2025/26 AEF as reported in the approved 2025/26 budget and updated for subsequent finance circular movements. The envisaged scenario assumes no movement in the re-baselined 2025/26 core grant for the duration of this plan. The optimistic and pessimistic scenarios have been flexed to 1% increase/decrease respectively.
- 2.8 It should be noted that when allocating grant funding to Local Government, the Scottish Government makes assumptions about growth in income from Council Tax, and adjusts grant funding allocations, accordingly. This plan assumes the expected flat cash commitment is net of such adjustment. In addition, historically the Scottish Government provided Local Authorities with support for loan charges and PPP Payments for borrowing undertaken in lieu of large capital grants. However, there are no new loans covered by this process and as principal and interest repayments reduce,

the support provided by Scottish Government through the General Revenue Grant also reduces. This plan, however, assumes that the overall Local Government quantum will remain static therefore any reduction in loan charges and PPP support will be redistributed across all 32 Local Authorities. Based on the council's average share of funds it is anticipated that over the term of this plan there will be a net gain of £8.570 million. There is, however, a risk that this funding could be diverted out with the Local Government portfolio and therefore the position will continue to be monitored, and any impact reported in future financial outlook papers.

Council Tax

- 2.9 Income from Council Tax accounts for around 17% of the Council's revenue resources with the estimated income based on a combination of Band D equivalent value, householder base and the expected rate of collection.
- 2.10 In setting the 2025/26 budget, members acknowledged the Council Tax Strategy report taken to Policy and Strategy Committee on 5 December 2024 highlighting that North Lanarkshire had the 5th lowest Band D charge across the 32 local authorities. As a result, the Council took the decision to approve a 10% increase to Council Tax, resulting in an increased Band D charge of £1,452.86. The Council also agreed to set aside 2% of the Council Tax increase for additional capital investment through the Community Investment Fund. This plan assumes that in line with the Council Tax Strategy report, that this will be committed for 3 years from 2025/26 to 2027/28 and return to 1% thereafter. This provides £14.154 million of additional resources over the five year planning period and £9.823 million over the 3 year budget period.
- 2.11 In addition to the increase in Council Tax rates noted above, it is also anticipated that additional income will be generated as a result of household growth. This is expected to generate an additional £3.072 million of Council Tax income in 2026/27, and £13.546 million over the course of the planning period. This includes assumed additional income from household growth ringfenced for the CIF programme of £8.604 million.

Use of Reserves / Resources

- 2.12 The principles linked to the Revenue Budget Strategy continue to allow for prudent and sustainable use of balances to support multi-year budgeting and help smooth budget gaps, in accordance with the Reserves Policy. This also provides for the Change Management Fund which is necessary to support the one-off costs of approved budget savings to enable a more strategic and sustainable approach to managing the challenging budget position, allowing time to develop and implement recurring savings.
- 2.13 This plan recognises the reversal of the 2025/26 one-off use of reserves approved to offset any additional cost arising from the increase to employers national insurance up to £4.400 million. Since the Council meeting, further calculations have indicated that the cost to the Council is lower than first anticipated, this combined with a higher than expected share of Scottish Government funding has resulted in a reduced call on one off use of reserves of £2.341m. In addition, one of use of reserves (£1.730 million) approved to offset the increased pressure on Council Tax Reduction Scheme as a result of the 10% Council Tax increase has reversed within the 2026/27 position.

Forecast Expenditure & Income Generation

Employee Cost Pressures

2.14 Employee costs remain the largest single element of the General Fund budget, accounting for a significant proportion of the General Fund budgeted expenditure in 2025/26. Cost pressures linked to the workforce are therefore material and a key variable which has the potential to impact significantly on the forecast plan. Information on the 2025/26 pay negotiations, as well forecast future employee cost pressures is outlined below.

2.14.1 Pay Award 2025/26

- As negotiations in relation to the 2025/26 pay award are ongoing there remains a real degree of uncertainty in relation to the total cost of any agreement to be borne by Local Authorities. As a result, no change has been made in relation to these costs from that presented in the most recent outlook presented to Council in February 2025. There is potential that COSLA will expect parity with offers made elsewhere in the public sector including the offer made to NHS staff of 8% over two years. However, the expectation is that the Scottish Government would provide necessary funding to support an increased offer. Crucially though, any agreement for 2025/26 pay award has the potential to impact the baseline position used to forecast the cost from 2026/27 onwards. Therefore, this will be kept under review as the negotiations progress and an update will be incorporated into a future Financial Outlook, as required.

2.14.2 Pay Award – Future Years Summary

- For the period of this plan, future pay awards are based on the Council funding an increase of 3%, reflecting the Public Sector Pay agenda of 9% over 3 years to 2027/28. A total provision of £19.600 million is estimated for 2026/27. Total provision over the next 3 years is anticipated to be £56.100 million. The optimistic scenario assumes pay awards will cost the Council 0.5% less than the envisaged scenario, whilst the pessimistic scenario assumes a 2.5% increase on the envisaged assumption, thus providing a range for potential pay award of £17.100 million to £32.000 million in 2026/27 or between £47.300 million and £101.100 million over the next 3 years. Furthermore, as previously advised the plan includes provision for a permanent reduction in pension contributions as a result of the most recent triennial revaluation of the Strathclyde Pension Fund. Reflecting the assumptions on pay award as noted above, a reduction in pension costs of £4.300 million is now anticipated in 2026/27. Pay award assumptions will remain under review as negotiations continue, and Financial Outlooks will be updated, as appropriate.

Non Pay Inflationary Pressures

- 2.15 The assumptions from 2026/27 onwards reflect on the OBR's most recent economic forecast at March 2025 and the latest Bank of England forecast for inflation at February 2025, indicating a downward trajectory towards 2% over the medium term.
- 2.16 Historically non-pay inflationary uplifts based on forecast relevant inflationary indices, have only been provided where deemed material and contractual in nature. This continues to be the case in this update to the MTFP. As a result, total contract inflationary pressures of £4.550 million in 2026/27 and £22.590 million over the 5 year period of the plan, are assumed.
- 2.17 Whilst energy costs have increased significantly over recent years there is evidence to suggest that contract prices negotiated for energy pre-purchased have reduced. There still remains a great deal of uncertainty however it is deemed reasonable to remove additional cost pressures for energy provided by the previous version on the plan, on

the basis that costs can be managed in the medium term within existing budgets. The budgetary requirements for future years will be kept under review with an update provided in future Financial Outlooks or MTFP updates as required.

Other Cost Pressures

- 2.18 Continuing Service Pressures (CSPs) of £2.500 million in 2026/27 has been reflected which represents the second year of commitment to recognise the increased cost of ASN activity as a result of emerging and future demand.
- 2.19 Other cost pressures totalling £18.883 million over the five years are also provided for. These predominantly relate to assumed increased costs of Council Tax Reduction Scheme associated with a Council Tax increase. In addition, provision is made for increased non-domestic rates costs, and other minor emerging service budget burdens.

Other Commitments

- 2.20 There is provision for loan debt costs in relation to the Community Investment Programme, including City Deal, which equates to £6.190 million in year 1 of the plan and £23.570 million across the planning period.
- 2.21 In addition, as advised in the 2025/26 MTFP update, the plan continues to recognise the updated forecast loan charge costs which have increased due to previously approved non-recurring loan debt re-profiling savings and increased interest rate costs. There also remains great uncertainty in forecasting when the budget will be required due to a number of variables, including the spend profile of the capital programme, therefore this plan does not change the provisions previously made.
- 2.22 The MTFP reported in June 2023 incorporated a saving of £4.500 million for the five years in respect of the funding for PPP contract obligations. It was recognised that additional budgetary provision would require to be incorporated into future MTFPs. Therefore, year four and five of this plan reflects an additional cost of £1.000 million. Further additional financial consequences will be recognised in future Financial Outlooks or MTFPs.

Sales, Fees & Charges

- 2.23 One of the key principles of the Revenue Budget Strategy, outlined in Appendix 5, is that maximising income should be considered, with future charging models for services to be informed by benchmarking and the principles of full cost recovery, where appropriate. The plan assumes additional income generation for discretionary charges of £1.000 million in 2026/27, in line with the approved policy to uplifted prices by 5% each year. The optimistic and pessimistic scenarios assume a slightly adjusted base for 2026/27 of £1.250million and £0.750 million, respectively.

Updated Medium Term Financial Forecast

Approved Savings / Advance Action

- 2.24 This plan recognises previously approved savings and base budget adjustments, currently totalling £2.030 million across the term of the plan. However, the plan also recognises the impact of prior year decisions to use one of resources to assist with the implementation of savings which result in a cost pressure of £2.948 million in 2026/27.

- 2.25 This plan assumes all other previously approved savings will be fully achieved. Committee should note that updates in this regard will be provided to future meetings and amendments to the Financial Plan will be made accordingly.

Strategic Use of Balances

- 2.26 The Council's unallocated balances continue to be closely monitored. A key principle of the Revenue Budget Strategy and the Revenue Budget Framework is that planned and sustainable use of available balances will be considered, in line with policy, and in accordance with a budget strategy recommended by the S95 Officer.

Summary – Medium Term Financial Forecasts

- 2.27 In summary, the envisaged scenario indicates a budget gap of £136.927 million over the five-year planning period and £85.949 million for the three-year budget period 2026/27 to 2028/29. Further details are contained within Appendix 1. Appendices 2 and 3, summarise the forecast pessimistic and optimistic scenarios indicating the gap could range between £64.852 million and £263.691 million, over the five years.
- 2.28 Appendix 4 provides a high-level summary of the movements between this plan and the previous plan reported to Committee in June 2024.

Council Tax Strategy

- 2.29 In line with the Revenue Budget Framework outlined below, Council officers will work with Elected Members to ensure options for potential solutions are presented to enable the Council to address the budget gap in each financial year and to meet its legal obligation to set a balanced budget.
- 2.30 Members will recall the budget strategy proposed by the S95 Officer in setting the 2024/25 budget made an assumption around Council Tax increases over the three year period, with the potential to materially reduce the forecast budget gaps and therefore ultimately the savings requirement. It is intended that the S95 Officer will present an update to the Council Tax Strategy to Policy and Strategy Committee in December 2025. However, should a similar approach be recommended for the 2026/27 to 2028/29 three year budget, members are reminded that an annual Council Tax increase between 5% and 10% is estimated to generate additional income between £12.600 million £22.100 million. The equivalent of £37.800 million and £66.300 million over a three year planning period.

Risks and Uncertainties

- 2.31 Whilst the assumptions applied to income and expenditure projections in this financial plan are based on the best information available at the time of writing, they are inherently uncertain. The key factors which are likely to impact upon the Council's assumptions and future financial plans have been discussed throughout the report, including the significant uncertainty in relation to the Council's funding settlement and uncertainty in assumed cost of pay awards. There are also a number of political factors which may impact on planning assumptions, including potential changes at UK and Scottish Government levels as a result of elections, and the financial consequences of this on Local Government, along with climate change commitments.
- 2.32 Other current notable risks previously reported include;

- 2.32.1 Ash tree dieback linked to a disease which could cause significant damage to the UK's ash population. As has been previously recently reported to Committee, there has been some capital funding allocated to support the cost in managing the diseased species. However, there is a still a risk that revenue resources are required in respect of this issue.
- 2.32.2 Committee are also reminded of Scottish Government's plans to review the Capital Accounting arrangements and statutory mitigations in respect of such, to ensure they remain fit for purpose. Since the revised circular issued in 2024, there has been no further movement. It is still understood that the plan is to comprehensively review existing statutory arrangements, with a view to reducing reliance on statutory mitigations and offer greater alignment with international accounting standards. This continues to cause real concerns and Local Authority Directors of Finance and COSLA continue to seek engagement on such plans. Removing existing statutory mitigations will have material financial consequences on revenue budgets and ultimately potentially impacting on capital investment programmes.
- 2.32.3 The Scottish Government launched a consultation in January 2025 seeking views on Local Authority General Power of Competence. This would give local authorities statutory power to act as an individual generally would, expanding the scope of activities that a council might undertake. The consultation closed on 31 March 2025, and an analysis report of the findings is expected to be made available in due course. There is no immediate impact to the Council from this. If the powers were to be enacted in Scotland, any decision to use those powers would be subject to normal decision-making processes where any financial impact would be taken into account.

Revenue Budget Strategy Update

- 2.33 The MTFP presented to committee in June 2024 provided an update on the Revenue Resources Budget Strategy that was approved in June 2019, providing a revision of the principles that underpin our financial plans to ensure robust and financially sustainable decisions have been taken in setting the revenue budget. Seven revised principles were recommended and set out at that time. The Section 95 Officer has carried out a further high level review this year to ensure these remain relevant and has concluded that no further update is required. Appendix 5 however provides members with a summary of the principles as a reminder.

Revenue Budget Framework

- 2.34 Aligned to the MTFP and Revenue Budget Strategy principles, Table 2 below provides an outline framework to govern the 2026/27 budget process and to ensure that the Council manages the rolling three year budget forecast position as reported in the annual MTFP, in a robust and timely manner. This framework will be reviewed annually.

Table 2

Action	Detail	Responsibility	Timeline
Annual update of MTFP to P&S Committee	Review and update the assumptions of the MTFP to ensure the Council has a robust and up to date forecast financial plan.	S95 Officer	Committee Cycle 2
Update & Report Financial Outlooks	Ongoing review of financial plan assumptions and provision of updated Financial Outlooks for material changes. These will be reported as part of the budget engagement and / or an update provided to Committee, as deemed appropriate.	S95 Officer	Ongoing between June 2025 and January 2026

Report on Delivery of Approved Savings	Updates reported to Finance & Resources Committee to approved savings are on target to deliver approved financial savings.	Chief Officers/ S95 Officer	Committee Cycle 3 2025 & Cycle 1 2026
Budget Strategy to Manage the 3 Year Position (e.g. smoothing)	The S95 Officer will consider the updated three gap and recommend a strategy to manage the position. This strategy will give due consideration to the scale of the challenge and the overall level of reserves available to support the position, and in line with the Reserves Policy.	S95 Officer	September 2025
All Member & Trade Union Engagement	Ongoing engagement to keep key stakeholders informed of the financial position and to support with decision making to set a balanced budget.	Chief Executive & S95 Officer	MTFP briefing in June 2025. Further briefings to be advised with revised Financial Outlooks
Review other Councils' approaches to identification of savings	Aligned with Principle 2 & 3 above and informed by benchmarking; research other LAs approach to savings to ensure NLC maximises all opportunities for efficiencies, savings, or income generation.	CMT	October 2025
Refresh of existing in-scope budget savings options	Officers will ensure there is a current list of options to support members decision making in closing future budget gaps, as required.	Chief Officers/ Finance Teams	Ongoing
Budget Report to Council	An update on the three-year financial forecast will be reported to Council which will incorporate the Council's grant settlement as indicated by Scottish Government.	S95/ Political Groups	

2.42 Continuing with the approach taken in relation to the 2025/26 budget setting, members will be invited to a briefing session about the MTFP. This is anticipated to take place in June and will allow members the opportunity to raise any questions or queries.

Integration Joint Board Medium Term Financial Plan

2.43 Table 3 below details the budget gap highlighted within the IJB MTFP approved in March 2025, alongside the anticipated budget gap for the Council. As the IJB sets out its MTFP and 3 year budget gap in March each year including the immediate financial year, the planning period covered therefore differs from the Council's planning period.

Table 3

	IJB Envisaged Budget Gap £000	NLC Envisaged Budget Gap £000
2025/26	14,729	
2026/27	18,322	34,638
2027/28	18,804	25,956
2028/29		25,355
3 Yeah Gap	51,855	85,949

- 2.44 The Council continue to pass on funding received from Scottish Government in respect of Adult Social Care activity including support for the changes to the Scottish living wage, uprating of free person care and its share of funding linked to pay awards. Whilst the IJB present their budget gap and recommended options for service redesign and transformation in order to close their gap on an annual basis, elected members should continue to be mindful of the Council's contribution to the IJB in support of its cost and demand pressures when settling its budget for 26/27 and beyond.

3. Measures of success

- 3.1 Development of solutions aligned to the Council's strategic objectives outlined in the Plan for North Lanarkshire.
- 3.2 Setting of a balanced budget for 2026/27 and subsequent years.
- 3.3 Successful and timeous implementation of approved solutions.

4. Supporting documents

Appendix 1	Envisaged Scenario
Appendix 2	Pessimistic Scenario
Appendix 3	Optimistic Scenario
Appendix 4	Summary of Movements
Appendix 5	Revenue Resources Budget Strategy – Key Principles



Greg Telfer
Chief Officer (Finance and Technology)

5. Impacts

<p>5.1</p>	<p>Public Sector Equality Duty and Fairer Scotland Duty Does the report contain information that has an impact as a result of the Public Sector Equality Duty and/or Fairer Scotland Duty? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?</p> <p>If Yes, has an assessment been carried out and published on the council's website? https://www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/your-community/equalities/equality-and-fairer-scotland-duty-impact-assessments Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>5.2</p>	<p>Financial impact Does the report contain any financial impacts? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If Yes, have all relevant financial impacts been discussed and agreed with Finance? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?</p>
<p>5.3</p>	<p>HR policy impact Does the report contain any HR policy or procedure impacts? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If Yes, have all relevant HR impacts been discussed and agreed with People Resources? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?</p>
<p>5.4</p>	<p>Legal impact Does the report contain any legal impacts (such as general legal matters, statutory considerations (including employment law considerations), or new legislation)? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If Yes, have all relevant legal impacts been discussed and agreed with Legal and Democratic? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?</p>
<p>5.5</p>	<p>Data protection impact Does the report / project / practice contain or involve the processing of personal data? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If Yes, is the processing of this personal data likely to result in a high risk to the data subject? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If Yes, has a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) been carried out and e-mailed to dataprotection@northlan.gov.uk Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>5.6</p>	<p>Technology / Digital impact Does the report contain information that has an impact on either technology, digital transformation, service redesign / business change processes, data management, or connectivity / broadband / Wi-Fi? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?</p>

	<p>Where the impact identifies a requirement for significant technology change, has an assessment been carried out (or is scheduled to be carried out) by the Enterprise Architecture Governance Group (EAGG)?</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>5.7</p>	<p>Environmental / Carbon impact</p> <p>Does the report / project / practice contain information that has an impact on any environmental or carbon matters?</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?</p>
<p>5.8</p>	<p>Communications impact</p> <p>Does the report contain any information that has an impact on the council's communications activities?</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?</p>
<p>5.9</p>	<p>Risk impact</p> <p>Is there a risk impact?</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the key risks and potential impacts, highlighting where the risk(s) are assessed and recorded (e.g. Corporate or Service or Project Risk Registers), and how they are managed?</p>
<p>5.10</p>	<p>Armed Forces Covenant Duty</p> <p>Does the report require to take due regard of the Armed Forces Covenant Duty (i.e. does it relate to healthcare, housing, or education services for in-Service or ex-Service personnel, or their families, or widow(er)s)?</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the provision which has been made to ensure there has been appropriate consideration of the particular needs of the Armed Forces community to make sure that they do not face disadvantage compared to other citizens in the provision of public services.</p>
<p>5.11</p>	<p>Children's rights and wellbeing impact</p> <p>Does the report contain any information regarding any council activity, service delivery, policy, or plan that has an impact on children and young people up to the age of 18, or on a specific group of these?</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact and the provision that has been made to ensure there has been appropriate consideration of the relevant Articles from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).</p> <p>If Yes, has a Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment (CRWIA) been carried out?</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p>

Envisaged Scenario
Appendix 1

	2026/27 £000s	2027/28 £000s	2028/29 £000s	2029/30 £000s	2030/31 £000s
Anticipated Cost Pressures	26,330	26,701	25,125	26,033	26,395
Pay Award	19,600	18,000	18,500	19,100	19,600
Pension Costs	(4,300)	0	0	0	0
Other Employee Costs; first stage review of pay and grading mode	0	0	0	0	0
Contract Inflation	4,550	4,530	4,380	4,500	4,630
Energy Costs	0	261	266	292	292
CSPs	2,500	0	0	0	0
Other Cost Pressures	4,980	4,910	2,979	3,141	2,873
Income Generation-Discretionary Fees & Charges	(1,000)	(1,000)	(1,000)	(1,000)	(1,000)
Other Commitments	9,490	8,790	6,490	4,800	5,800
City Deal Commitments	290	290	290	0	0
Community Investment Fund	5,900	5,900	3,500	3,200	4,200
Loan Charges Obligations	2,400	2,600	2,700	600	600
PPP Contract Obligations	0	0	0	1,000	1,000
SPF cost reduction	28,300	0	0	0	0
New Investment; Community Hubs CFCR	(23,416)	0	0	0	0
Use of one off to smooth budget	(3,984)	0	0	0	0
Total Cost Pressures	35,820	35,491	31,615	30,833	32,195
Less:					
Resource Forecasts	8,730	9,230	6,260	4,770	7,280
AEF adjustments - Core	1,830	2,330	1,760	570	2,080
1% Council Tax Increase; CIF	3,828	3,912	2,083	2,130	2,201
Net Council Tax Growth inc. rebaselining adj in year 1	3,072	2,988	2,417	2,070	2,999
Budget Gap before carry fwd of unresolved gap & advanced action	27,090	26,261	25,355	26,063	24,915
Unresolved Recurring Budget Gap B/fwd	3,984	0	0	0	0
Revised Budget Gap before advanced action	31,074	26,261	25,355	26,063	24,915
Approved Advance Action	3,564	(305)	0	0	0
Approved Base Budget Adjustments	(507)	(305)	0	0	0
2024/25 Approved Savings now applied	(1,218)	0	0	0	0
Reversal of previous years use of reserves for delayed saving	1,218	0	0	0	0
Use of Reserves for CTR impact of CTAX	1,730	0	0	0	0
Use of Reserves for eNIC shortfall	2,341	0	0	0	0
Budget Gap after approved advanced action	34,638	25,956	25,355	26,063	24,915
3 year total (26/27 to 28/29)			85,949		

Pessimistic Scenario

Appendix 2

	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Anticipated Cost Pressures	38,850	42,982	42,754	44,902	46,632
Pay Award	32,000	33,600	35,500	37,400	39,500
Pension Costs	(4,400)	0	0	0	0
Other Employee Costs; first stage review of pay and grading mode	0	0	0	0	0
Contract Inflation	5,350	5,400	5,300	5,470	5,650
Energy Costs	255	523	536	552	552
CSPs	2,500	0	0	0	0
Other Cost Pressures	3,895	4,210	2,168	2,230	1,680
Income Generation-Discretionary Fees & Charges	(750)	(750)	(750)	(750)	(750)
Other Commitments	10,880	9,080	6,780	4,800	4,200
City Deal Commitments	580	580	580	0	0
Community Investment Fund	5,900	5,900	3,500	3,200	4,200
Loan Charges Obligations	2,400	2,600	2,700	600	0
PPP Contract Obligations	0	0	0	1,000	0
SPF cost reduction	29,400	0	0	0	0
New Investment; Community Hubs CFCR	(23,416)	0	0	0	0
Use of one off to smooth budget	(3,984)	0	0	0	0
Total Cost Pressures	49,730	52,062	49,534	49,702	50,832
Less:					
Resource Forecasts	(380)	190	(2,710)	(4,130)	(1,540)
AEF adjustments - Core	(7,280)	(6,710)	(7,210)	(8,330)	(6,740)
1% Council Tax Increase; CIF	3,828	3,912	2,083	2,130	2,201
Net Council Tax Growth inc. rebaselining adj in year 1	3,072	2,988	2,417	2,070	2,999
Budget Gap before carry fwd of unresolved gap & advanced action	50,110	51,872	52,244	53,832	52,372
Unresolved Recurring Budget Gap B/fwd	3,984	0	0	0	0
Revised Budget Gap before advanced action	54,094	51,872	52,244	53,832	52,372
Approved Advance Action	3,564	(305)	0	0	0
Approved Base Budget Adjustments	(507)	(305)	0	0	0
2024/25 Approved Savings now applied	(1,218)	0	0	0	0
Reversal of previous years use of reserves for delayed saving	1,218	0	0	0	0
Use of Reserves for CTR impact of CTAX	1,730	0	0	0	0
Use of Reserves for eNIC shortfall	2,341	0	0	0	0
Budget Gap after approved advanced action	53,674	51,567	52,244	53,832	52,372
3 year total (26/27 to 28/29)			157,485		

Optimistic Scenario

Appendix 3

	2026/27 £000s	2027/28 £000s	2028/29 £000s	2029/30 £000s	2030/31 £000s
Anticipated Cost Pressures	22,177	22,706	21,183	22,002	22,847
Pay Award	17,100	14,900	15,300	15,700	16,100
Pension Costs	(4,300)	0	0	0	0
Other Employee Costs; first stage review of pay and grading mode	0	0	0	0	0
Contract Inflation	3,720	3,660	3,470	3,550	3,630
Energy Costs	(256)	4	7	9	9
CSPs	2,500	0	0	0	0
Other Cost Pressures	4,663	5,391	3,656	3,994	4,358
Income Generation-Discretionary Fees & Charges	(1,250)	(1,250)	(1,250)	(1,250)	(1,250)
Other Commitments	9,290	8,790	6,490	4,800	4,200
City Deal Commitments	290	290	290	0	0
Community Investment Fund	5,900	5,900	3,500	3,200	4,200
Loan Charges Obligations	2,400	2,600	2,700	600	0
PPP Contract Obligations	0	0	0	1,000	0
SPF cost reduction	28,100	0	0	0	0
New Investment; Community Hubs CFCR	(23,416)	0	0	0	0
Use of one off to smooth budget	(3,984)	0	0	0	0
Total Cost Pressures	31,467	31,496	27,673	26,802	27,047
Less:					
Resource Forecasts	17,830	18,440	15,590	14,210	16,820
AEF adjustments - Core	10,930	11,540	11,090	10,010	11,620
1% Council Tax Increase; CIF	3,828	3,912	2,083	2,130	2,201
Net Council Tax Growth inc. rebaselining adj in year 1	3,072	2,988	2,417	2,070	2,999
Budget Gap before carry fwd of unresolved gap & advanced action	13,637	13,056	12,083	12,592	10,227
Unresolved Recurring Budget Gap B/fwd	3,984	0	0	0	0
Revised Budget Gap before advanced action	17,621	13,056	12,083	12,592	10,227
Approved Advance Action	3,564	(305)	0	0	0
Approved Base Budget Adjustments	(507)	(305)	0	0	0
2024/25 Approved Savings now applied	(1,218)	0	0	0	0
Reversal of previous years use of reserves for delayed saving	1,218	0	0	0	0
Use of Reserves for CTR impact of CTAX	1,730	0	0	0	0
Use of Reserves for eNIC shortfall	2,341	0	0	0	0
Budget Gap after approved advanced action	17,201	12,751	12,083	12,592	10,227
3 year total (26/27 to 28/29)	42,035				

	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	Appendix 4 Total
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
MTFP Gap June 2024	21,320	19,095	19,433	18,675	78,523
Action Approved					
2024/25 Pay Award	100	200	200	100	600
Adjustment to future year pay assumptions	6,000	6,200			12,200
Non Pay inflation assumptions	680	140	30	(170)	680
Committee/Council Decisions	(174)	(305)			(479)
One off use of balances	4,400				4,400
Total Changes	11,006	6,235	230	(70)	17,401
Revised Gap per February 2025	32,326	25,330	19,663	18,605	95,924
Updated Assumptions April 2025					
<u>Cost Pressures</u>					
Pay Award	1,900	(100)	6,400	6,800	15,000
Pension Costs	(100)				(100)
Contract Inflation	630	630	580	720	2,560
Energy Costs	(416)	(163)	(167)	(183)	(929)
Other Cost Pressures	2,720	2,510	449	471	6,150
Sales Fees & Charges	50	110	160	220	539
Community Investment Fund	3,200	2,900	500	(200)	6,400
<u>Funding</u>					
AEF adjustments - Core	(1,830)	(2,330)	(1,760)	(570)	(6,490)
2%/1% Council Tax Increase; CIF	(2,008)	(2,042)	(153)	(240)	(4,443)
Net Council Tax Growth inc. rebaselining adj in year	(1,172)	(888)	(317)	440	(1,937)
<u>Impact of Approved Actions</u>					0
Approved Base Budget Adjustments	(333)				(333)
Reversal of use of Reserves for CTR impact of CTAX	1,730				1,730
Reversal of use of Reserves for eNIC shortfall	(2,059)				(2,059)
Movement	2,312	626	5,692	7,458	16,088
Revised MTFP Gap	34,638	25,956	25,355	26,063	112,012
3 Year Budget Gap			85,949		

Revenue Resources Budget Strategy Key Principles

1) Revenue funding will be directed to the Council's key priorities

Integration of the Plan for North Lanarkshire and the Financial Plan will ensure that resources are directed towards the key priorities and that current service delivery is prudent, affordable and sustainable. Services should manage allocated revenue resources effectively and ensure delivery of previously approved savings, whilst managing unmet budget burdens, thus enabling net allocated revenue resources to be directed to delivery of current service provision. The Programme of Work is critical to delivery of the financial strategy, driving change and future financial efficiencies and savings. Any requirement for new or enhanced services should be reported either through appropriate committees or part of the budget process, to ensure there is a coherent decision-making strategy and prioritisation of resources, particularly given the ongoing future financial challenges the Council faces.

2) Three year rolling budgets will be developed

A strategy to manage the position in line with the Revenue Budget Framework will be recommended by the S95 Officer. It is recognised the strategy will require a combination of solutions and initiatives to close future budget gaps, and that mixture of shorter and longer term initiatives may be required, some of which will not deliver early financial benefits due to longer lead times. This will include the continued need for all Services to identify and deliver savings.

3) Service delivery should remain under continuous review to ensure the Council delivers best value and efficient services

Service design and delivery reviews should be informed by benchmarking and where appropriate reported for approval through a relevant Committee, in accordance with the Scheme of Administration. This will support the Council in its statutory duty to provide best value, inform decision making and allow the financial implications to be incorporated timeously into the MTFP or Financial Outlooks. Such reviews should enable service performance to be compared with other peer Local Authorities, aiming to **minimise cost, maximising income generation and potentially generating financial savings**. These reviews may mean re-prioritisation or a change in service performance, to enable the Council to deliver more of the existing services, for longer.

The Revenue Budget Framework aims to ensure there is a cohesive and joined up approach to consideration of savings, particularly where these are crosscutting. Such an approach to decision making will require strong and effective leadership, to ensure the Council remains financially sustainable.

4) Maximising income generation should be considered

The opportunities to maximise income generation should be informed by benchmarking, where appropriate, and should include implementing a Council Tax Strategy to maximise revenue resources available for service priorities. All future charging models should be informed by the principle of full cost recovery. Once charges are established on this basis, future increases will be index-linked in line with approved policies.

5) Planned and sustainable use of available balances will be considered in line with policy

Sustainable use of balances will be considered where it is prudent and affordable and in line with the Reserves Policy and the provisions contained in the Revenue Budget Framework outlined below. This may include managing the financial impact of a budget strategy, as recommended by the S95 Officer, with the aim to close future budget gaps and to support the timing of delivering approved savings.

6) Members and other key stakeholders will be actively involved in the budget process

The financial pressures facing the Council means Councillors need to make difficult decisions. To manage these challenges requires effective political leadership and communications. It is essential that all Councillors, and other key stakeholders as deemed appropriate, work effectively with officers to identify and deliver necessary savings or alternative solutions, to and meet the statutory requirement to set a balanced budget.

7) Consideration will be given to proposals to fully implement the use of participatory budgeting and opportunities to meet statutory requirements under the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015

The outcome of such considerations will inform members' decisions around the solutions to ensure the Council continues to manage the budget challenges it faces.

