

NEWCASTLE UNDER LYME  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

# Grassland Management Strategy

A short presentation on Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council's new Grassland Management Strategy to increase the biodiversity and carbon sequestration of the borough as a key aspect of Newcastle-under-Lyme's Sustainable Environment Strategy & Delivery Plan.

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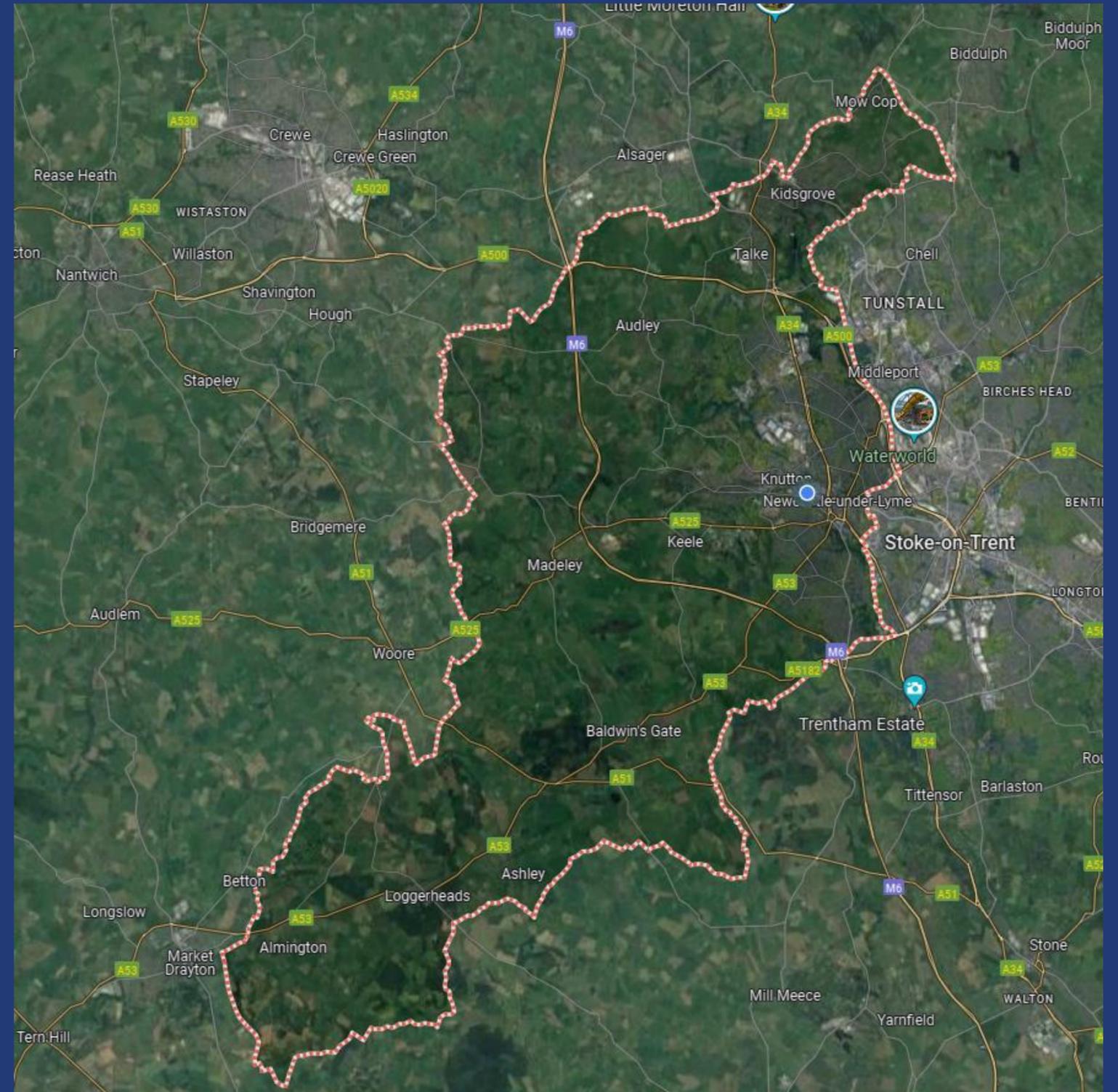
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# Newcastle Introduction

Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council is a district local authority located in Staffordshire County. The borough is in north Staffordshire and a close neighbour to Stoke-on-Trent. The borough is home to roughly 123,900 residents and 56,000 households.

The borough is home to principal urban areas around Newcastle and Kidsgrove with the remainder of the borough comprised of mostly rural populations such as villages.



# Staff Team Introduction

Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council's Streetscene Service and Sustainable Environment Team is composed of 60 operations staff and crew members who deliver and develop services throughout the borough including:

- Parks, Gardens and Open Spaces
- Highways Grass cutting
- Cemeteries, Crematorium and closed churchyards,
- Arboriculture
- Street Sweeping
- Litter, Dog Waste & Fly-Tipping
- Playground safety and management
- Fly-Posting & Graffiti
- Green Flag and Britain in Bloom attainment



# Grassland Management Strategy

Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council Sustainable Environment and Streetscene Services attended a sustainable land management training session with Staffordshire Wildlife Trust in January 2024. From this session the Council began development of a Grassland Management Strategy to promote the growth of long grasses in the borough.

The Council has an abundance of regularly mowed grasslands in the borough which have the potential to provide enhanced environmental diversity habitats and introduce visual interest and mixed use through the promotion of long meadow growth.

This strategy is organised through two key documents, the main strategy document and the policy documents.

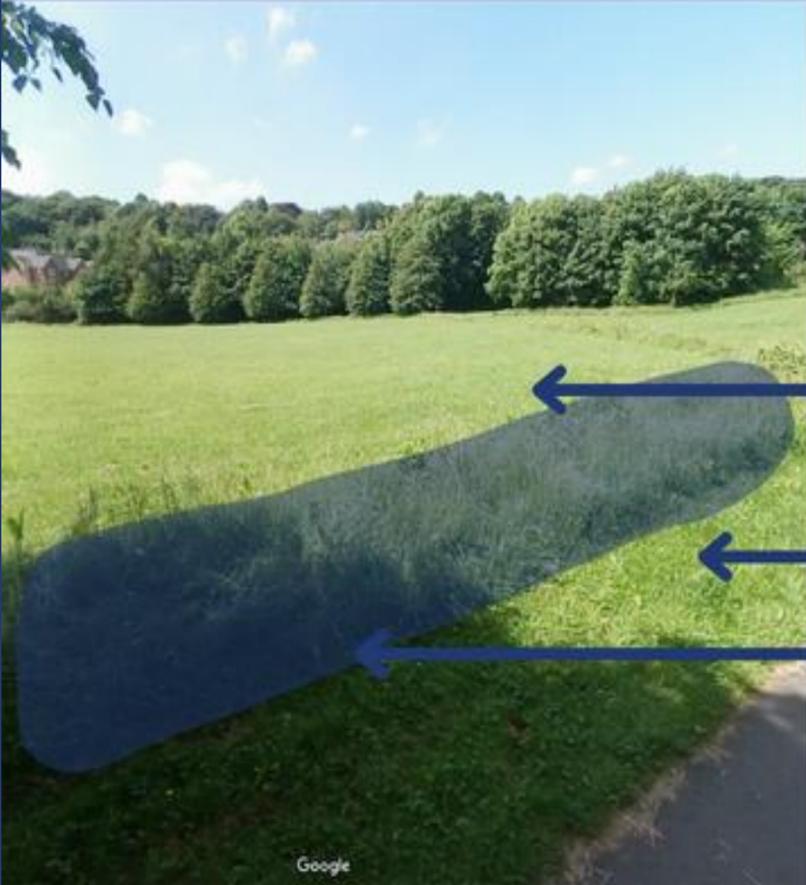


# Grassland Management Strategy

The Strategy includes 6 main policies which detail the different mowing regimes required for different types of area and identifies those that will be used for long meadow generation. Below is listed the 6 individual policies:

## Policy 1 - Public Open Spaces & Informal Sport Amenity

**Public Open Space & Informal Sports Amenity Example**



Cut every four weeks or when appropriate to a target height of 50mm

Mid March to Mid October

Highlighted areas indicate the potential for long meadows.

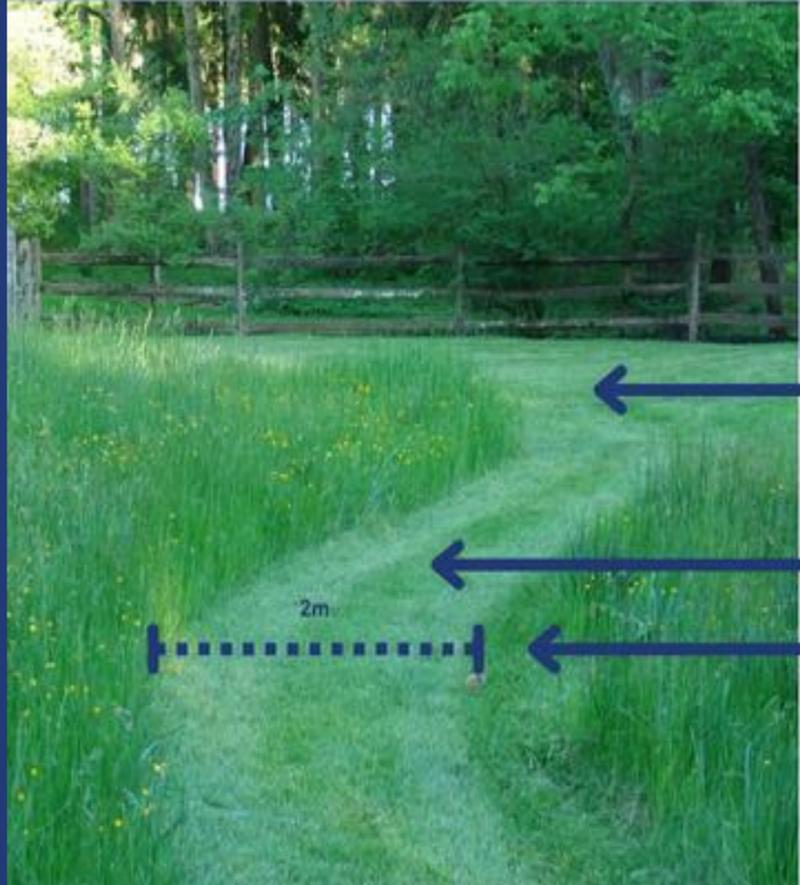
From mid-March to mid-October public and informal sports spaces will be cut to a target height of 50mm every four weeks. Cuttings will be chopped and left on fresh cut areas.

Areas near informal sports areas and path/road verges will be left for viewing and sightlines.

Areas surrounding these amenities such as verges and banks may be left uncut to promote long meadows. They will have desire lines, cut edges and viewing areas as seen by the highlighted areas.

## Policy 2 - Designated Pathways & Additional Amenities

**Designated Pathways & Additional Amenities Example**



Cut every four weeks or when appropriate to a target height of 50mm

Mid March to Mid October

Highlighted areas indicate the potential for long meadows.

From mid-March to mid-October designated paths and additional amenities will be cut to a target height of 50mm every four weeks.

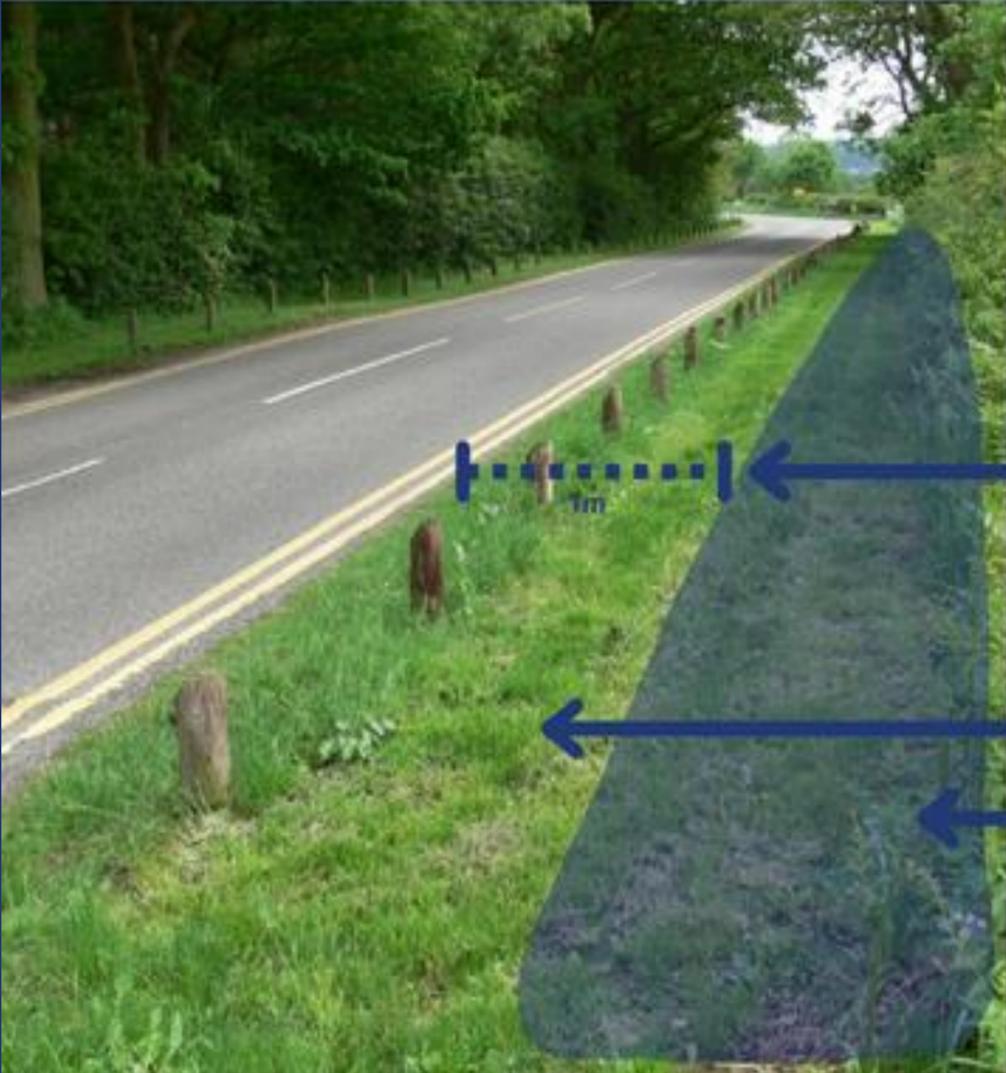
Cuttings will be chopped and left on fresh cut areas.

Desire lines and paths cut through long meadows will be cut 2m wide or variable for popular paths. Additional Amenities will be cut based on the attached public open space or sports pitch.

# Grassland Management Strategy

## Policy 3 - Meadow Edges & Verges

Meadow Edges & Verges Example



Cut every four weeks or when appropriate to a target height of 50mm



Mid March to Mid October

Highlighted areas indicate the potential for long meadows.

From mid-March to mid-October meadow edges and verges will be cut to a target height of 50mm every four weeks and be at least 1m wide or according to the County's specifications.

Cuttings will be chopped and left on fresh cut areas.

Meadow edges and verges located around meadows, near paths or roads will have a long meadow attached to it, if there is enough space and it is over 3m in width.

## Policy 4 - Amenity Prestige

Amenity Prestige Example



Cut every two weeks or when appropriate to a target height of 50mm



Mid March to Mid October

Highlighted areas indicate the potential for long meadows.

Amenity prestige areas like the Brompton Museum and Park will have well cut lawns due to the prestige of the site. This means no long meadows will be created unless justified like under tree canopy.

From mid-March to mid-October amenity prestige areas will be cut to a target height of 50mm every two weeks and be at least 1m wide or according to the County's standards. Cuttings will be collected after each cut.



# Grassland Management Strategy

## Policy 5 - Low Activity

**Low Activity Amenity Example**



Cut to a height of 50mm every time it grows up to 200mm (once a year at the beginning of season).



Mid March to Mid October

Highlighted areas indicate the potential for long meadows.

Low activity amenity areas can be identified for the generation of long meadows such as this area in Kidsgrove, Coalpit Hill. This area will be paired with other policies like meadow edges which makes it look clean. Trees have been planted here which pairs well with meadow generation.

From mid-March to mid-October low activity areas will be cut to a target height of 50mm once a year if able to. Cuttings will be left after each cut.



## Policy 5 – Tree canopy Amenity

**Tree Canopy Amenity Example**



Cut to a height of 50mm every time it grows up to 200mm (0-1 a year at the beginning of season).



Mid March to Mid October

Highlighted areas indicate the potential for long meadows.

Canopy areas that aren't used or that may cause safety issues by many can be identified for the generation of long meadows such as this area at Lyme Valley. This area will be paired with other policies like meadow edges/verges which makes it look clean.

From mid-March to mid-October canopy areas will not be cut unless justified. If cut, cuttings will be left after each cut.




# Grassland Management Strategy

## Policy 6 – Wildflower Meadows

Wherever possible the Council will identify areas of long meadows that can be sown to create perennial wildflower sites for the benefit of the environment and people. They will be managed similarly to P5 however will need specialised care to secure the welfare of the wildflowers.



# Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council Sustainable Environment Strategy & Delivery Plan

The aim of the Sustainable Environment Strategy and Delivery Plan is to drive forward a sustainable society, economy and environment in Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough for the benefit of residents, businesses, visitors and the natural environment by 2050, focusing on the built environment and energy, travel and transport, natural environment and sequestration, and engagement and behaviour change.



Facilitate the development into a Net Zero Council by 2030 through the decarbonisation of the Council's built environment and fleet.



Facilitate the development into a Net Zero borough by 2050 through the decarbonisation of housing, businesses, transport and more.



Promote the natural environment in the borough to increase biodiversity, carbon sequestration, and storage.



Develop a service focused strategy and delivery plan in the Council to engage Council staff and deliver service owned actions.



Engage with residents, businesses and visitors through communication networks to create sustainable behaviour change within the borough.



# Grassland Management Strategy

The Grassland Management Strategy and Policy documents were adopted by the Council in April 2024 with these main objectives:

- To increase biodiversity and nature recovery networks in the Borough.
- To increase efficiency in Council resource use by enabling resources for priority jobs and works in the Borough.
- To contribute towards the Councils Net Zero goals by 2030 and 2050 by sequestering and storing more carbon with increased grasslands.
- To inform residents, businesses and visitors about the change in grassland management and why biodiversity is important for the Borough.



# Grassland Management Strategy

## Phase 1: Pocket Ward Grasslands

Phase 1 will incorporate new grassland management regimes at different pocket sites in different wards. These are listed below:

- Bradwell – Arnold Grove
- Clayton – Kingsbridge medical centre
- Brampton Vale (Donkey Field)
- Bradwell - Chatterley Close (already meadow location)
- Crackley – Crackley Field
- Chesterton – Douglas Road
- Westlands – Guernsey Drive
- Keele – Keele Cemetery (already meadow location)
- Westlands – Leys Drive
- Chesterton – Loomer Road
- Clayton – Norwich Place – Stafford Ave
- Poolfields – Rotterdam Field
- Chesterton – Sheldon Grove
- Kidsgrove - Coalpit Hill
- Cross Heath – The Wammy
- Thistleberry – Thistleberry Parkway
- Westbury – Westbury Park
- Clayton – Wye Road

## Phase 2: Review & Consult

After Phase 1 (which may be conducted over 2 years), the Council will conduct a review and consultation to identify and report on the social and environmental impacts of pockets ward grasslands programme. If proved to benefit biodiversity and improve resident views on wildlife in public spaces then Phase 3 in parks and Grassland Spaces may begin.

## Phase 3: Parks & Grassland Space

Once Phase 2 is completed then the Council may move to Phase 3. The Council will begin to roll out the new management regimes throughout the parks listed below and other grassland spaces such as road verges and low amenity spaces.

- Bathpool Park
- Lyme Valley parkway
- Brampton Museum & Park
- Wolstanton Marsh & Park



# Progress to Date

January 2024

Staffordshire  
Wildlife Trust  
Training  
Session

April 2024

NuLBC  
Cabinet Adopts  
Grassland  
Management  
Strategy

June 2024

Sustainable  
Environment  
Strategy &  
Delivery Plan  
Adopted

Development  
of a Grassland  
Management  
Strategy

January - April 2024

Implementation  
of reduced  
regimes to  
Phase 1 sites

April - Ongoing 2024

Processing  
feedback and  
developing  
engaging media.

June 2024 - Ongoing



# Positives & Negatives

- Long meadows have begun to develop in the borough, increasing short-term local biodiversity and carbon capture.
- Commencement of refresh of council webpages and media content (like social media) to engage with residents on this new strategy and increase awareness and engagement.

- The Council have received low complaint numbers in relation to several meadow sites.
- Double average rain fall in April and May has resulted in challenges to achieve planned mowing regimes.



# Conclusion



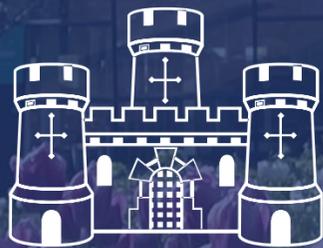
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Scan here for the full strategy



# Thank you for Listening!

Learn more at [newcastle-staffs.gov.uk](http://newcastle-staffs.gov.uk) or send me an email at [thomas.guilbert-newell@newcastle-staffs.gov.uk](mailto:thomas.guilbert-newell@newcastle-staffs.gov.uk).



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