

EXPERIENCE NEWCASTLE

Reinvigorating our
historic market town



More people living and working in our town

Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council and partners have an extensive programme for regeneration and growth of our town centre.

Working with businesses through the Newcastle Business Improvement District (BID), Staffordshire County Council, Aspire Housing, Keele University and the local community, we have targeted action to make Newcastle-under-Lyme a vibrant destination and unique visitor experience.

Our town centre offers a place where everyone can live, work, shop, study and spend their leisure time. It has great retail, public service, leisure, cultural, business and residential facilities that work for local residents and attract visitors and businesses to the town centre.

- Future High Streets Fund – investing £11m of capital grant in redevelopment of key Town Centre sites
- Newcastle Town Deal – investing £23.6m of capital grant in strategic developments and projects in Newcastle
- UK Shared Prosperity Fund – investing £4.8m of revenue grant in projects that will deliver programmes of interventions to people and skills, businesses and communities and places.



More visitors staying longer and spending more

The historic market

Newcastle's market is an integral part of the town centre offer and contributes to the overall retail experience for local people and visitors to enjoy. The market has been a feature of the town for centuries and remains important both culturally and economically.

Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council and its partners remain committed to the long-term success of the market and feel integrating its development with the management and support of the high street has created significant benefits. Our market is award-winning, highly commended by the National Association of British Market Authorities (NABMA).

Action: to build on initial successes and further reinvigorate the historic market to continue to be a vibrant attraction

- Modernise trading interactions (digital pitch booking and payments)
- Rationalise and improve trading pitches and stalls
- Diversify and increase linked activities, including licenced events
- Support new and young traders

Guildhall

The Guildhall continues to provide a hub for partners to share knowledge and jointly promote and deliver events and attractions. It is the base for BID and Support Staffordshire to maintain an accessible presence in the town centre.



Parking

There is a range of car parks in Newcastle Town Centre and our Car Parking Strategy meets the current and future needs of the town centre for visitors, businesses and residents, including those who will live in the town centre. This will help to minimise town centre congestion and improve air quality.

Action: to continue to deliver the short, medium and long-term parking policy for Newcastle Town Centre

- Continue to deliver a charging policy which addresses the competing needs of businesses, shoppers and commuters, including discounts for identified times and events
- Build a modern multi-storey car park on the Ryecroft site by 2024
- Demolish and repurpose the outdated Midway multi-storey car park
- Rationalise and improve the remaining car park stock



Strong links with the local businesses

In 2021 Newcastle town centre businesses voted to support a Business Improvement District (BID), which would actively promote the town for everyone's benefit.

As partners, we help BID to deliver its major objectives:

- Support business growth and investment by working in partnership with key stakeholders to enhance Newcastle-under-Lyme as an attractive and forward thinking town
- Create a welcoming and attractive town by building a safe, appealing centre that can be enjoyed by the residents, visitors and people who work in Newcastle-under-Lyme
- Celebrate and promote Newcastle-under-Lyme as a town for all by collaborating to build awareness locally and regionally of its heritage and identity



Adding to the town centre experience

Programmes of work are in progress to deliver on the aspiration to make the town more able to meet future needs and trends, and create a town centre that has something for everyone day or night.

Healthy High Street – understanding trading conditions and acting to generate footfall, build confidence in the surroundings and support local traders. We will engage with key stakeholders via BID to evolve and develop this programme to address issues of concern and take advantage of opportunities as they arise.

We will support businesses in developing online trading and improving social media capability, to put local businesses in a strong position to address changing trading environments. We will complement Newcastle's strength in providing a variety of non-retail footfall generators such as cafes, restaurants, bars, leisure venues and space for informal socialising by curating an ongoing programme of events and on-street activities to ensure the town centre is a consistently interesting and exciting place to spend time – a "destination". We will continue, with partners and stakeholders, to positively promote Newcastle-under-Lyme as a destination.

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As partners, we help BID to deliver its major objectives:

Diversification – reflecting the need to bring forward residential and non-retail employment uses into currently under-utilised or redundant assets, bringing more people into the town centre to live and work to underpin.

The Council, working with Staffordshire County Council and others, has brought forward the redevelopment of the Ryecroft site. Demolition is complete and the first phase of building towards provision of a mixed use scheme to increase town centre footfall will begin in late 2023. The Council has also purchased York Place to enable phased implementation of a masterplan, which will link the Ryecroft development to the town centre with new buildings and a public space.

The Council has further improved the visitor experience with award-winning town centre public art such as subway tiling and murals, sculptures, exhibitions, floral and sustainable planting displays and scheduled town centre cleansing, including the innovative Town Ranger working across ownership boundaries to tackle environmental blight. Wayfinding has also been improved to key attractions.

Our message to support the changes is focused on visitor experience: "Experience new street markets, experience great independent shops and experience a great night out."

Events add to the experience

In 2023 Newcastle-under-Lyme celebrated the 850th anniversary of the granting of the first Royal Charter with many special events, however there is a varied programme of regular events and attractions, which focuses on engaging town centre businesses for support and to generate visitors.

Regular events include:

- General Market on Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays
- Castle Artisan Market on 12 Sundays throughout the year (+ 1 Bank Holiday)
- Antique Market on Tuesdays and Thursdays
- Vegan Festival on 2 occasions
- Greyhound Gap on 2 occasions
- Record Fair on 6 occasions
- Street Food and other bespoke events on 5 occasions
- Lymelight Festival
- Jazz and Blues Festival
- Christmas Light Switch On Event
- Armed Forces Day
- Astley Homecoming



Improving the look, feel and safety of the town centre

Working with town centre businesses and the police, and to ensure that the town centre feels and remains safe, we operate a comprehensive, live-monitored CCTV system covering most of the town centre and main subway access points into the town. We work closely with the police to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour. We have recently introduced a Public Spaces Protection Order covering the town centre to target the low-level disruption that bothers people. We have opened a Safe Space in the town centre to help women get home safely during our busy night time economy, and have improved lighting and CCTV in identified areas to make popular pedestrian routes safer. We also operate a service to identify and support rough sleepers into appropriate accommodation.

The Britain in Bloom campaign is a Borough-wide partnership which includes residents, businesses, schools, community groups and a wide range of volunteers. Not just a floral competition, it makes a major contribution to promoting the local economy and increasing civic pride. We have won a gold award in the small city category of the regional competition for 21 consecutive years and in 2023 won the overall top prize in the RHS Britain in Bloom national finals. The Britain in Bloom entry has driven improvements to the town centre roundabouts with sustainable planting and art sculptures, as well as refurbishing the fountains on Nelson Place. Local business frontages have improved with hanging baskets and there has been an increase in sustainable planting displays to complement traditional florals in town centre public spaces such as the award-winning Queens Gardens, which also holds a Green Flag award.

Newcastle Town Deal Board comprises key partners of the Council, Staffordshire County Council, Aspire, BID, New Vic Theatre, Keele University, the Newcastle and Stafford Colleges Group and others. This group sets the strategic direction for the future town centre.

Newcastle Task Force co-ordinates the delivery of the action plans in relation to community safety, markets and events, parking, marketing and branding, business support and management of public spaces. Working with partner agencies such as BID, Staffordshire County Council, Aspire and Staffordshire Police, they promote and develop a vibrant town and historic market.



Investment and Diversification:

Future High Streets Fund

In December 2020 MHCLG (as was) confirmed that Newcastle had been successful in its bid to secure a FHSF Grant of £11m to redevelop The Ryecroft site, which included the demolition of the former civic centre, the provision of a new multi-storey car park and development plots for residential and commercial use, and potentially a new mid-range hotel.

The grant also included an award for the purchase and demolition of the underused York Place shopping centre. Redevelopment will see shop and office developments, coupled with public open space to link the Ryecroft development with the town centre.

The lower end of High Street will also benefit from the FHSF grant: once the new multi-storey car park on the Ryecroft is open the existing Midway car park will be demolished to provide a development site for residential units. In addition to this there is a public realm element to the strategy with investment in the market and public spaces. These works will be complete by 2024.

Newcastle Town Deal

In late 2021 MHCLG (as was) confirmed that the Newcastle Town Deal had been approved and that £23.6m would be granted for:-

1. Investment in Knutton and Chesterton in line with the developed Master Plan for the area
2. The development of enterprise units on the former 'Zanzibar site' in association with Aspire and its new residential development
3. Investment in walking and cycle networks
4. Investment into the creation of a new 'digital society' in association with Keele University
5. The development of a new Centre for Performing Arts focusing on circus skills and training
6. Investment in EV Car Charging Points
7. Investment in mega-fast internet infrastructure to drive new business development in the town

UK Shared Prosperity Fund

In 2022 DLHUC awarded £4.8m to the Council through the Shared Prosperity Fund to fund investment in an overarching objective for Building Pride in Place and Increasing Life Chances through three investment priorities:

- Community and place – interventions include improvements to high street infrastructure, green spaces, energy efficiency and getting about
- Supporting Local Business – interventions include support for the visitor economy, enhancing digital skills in the market place and supporting innovation and R&D
- People and Skills – interventions include skills and training aimed at reducing worklessness and improving digital skills in the population.

Borough Growth Fund

The Borough Growth Fund was established in 2020 for the purpose of enabling investment in corporate priorities. The Borough Growth Fund is used to invest in initiatives that are forecast to generate on-going revenue savings through reducing the costs of service delivery or through the generation of additional income.

Current initiatives include the One Council Programme, the Sustainable Environment Strategy and Economic Sustainability initiatives to get people back into the town centre.