

Council Business

New Local Plan

Northumberland County Council has issued a statutory notice confirming its intention to prepare a new Northumberland Local Plan and Housing Design Supplementary Plan, formally starting the plan-making process.

Although early work is already under way (including evidence gathering and a recent Call for Sites), the 30-month statutory timetable is provisionally scheduled to begin on **9 September 2026**, with plan adoption targeted for **March 2029**.

Key milestones include a **scoping consultation from 20 May to 1 July 2026**, consultations on emerging and proposed plan content during 2027–28, submission for examination in **September 2028**, and final adoption in **March 2029**. The notice has been circulated to statutory bodies, parish and town councils, and other consultees, and all documents are available on the council's website.

Green Spaces Review

NCC is proposing changes to how grass and green spaces may be managed across the county, with the aim of:

- Improving wildlife and biodiversity
- Responding to climate change commitments
- Continuing to provide good value for money

This follows public consultation and local trials where reducing mowing has led to a clear increase in wildflowers, bees, and other wildlife.

It is likely that cutting frequencies will reduce from the current rate of 10-13 cuts a season across 10-15% of grassland.

A consultation carried out with over 500 residents saw more than 85% of respondents say they would consider less frequent maintenance such as mowing to allow "natural growth and flowering".

The move would also save Northumberland County Council around £200,000 a year.

The exact areas where cutting will be reduced have yet to be confirmed, but council officers say the proposals have the support of the majority of the public. Changes will be targeted, not across the board and further information will be shared with parish councils and residents, with changes expected to be introduced gradually from 2027 onwards.

Outline Planning Application

Outline plans have been submitted for a major industrial development at West Hartford Park, including employment, research, battery storage, petrol station, drive thru coffee shop, gym, retail premises and ground-mounted solar panels. The site was previously subject to an application for more than 500 homes in 2019, but this was rejected.

Castle Morpeth Community Partnership

The next meeting will be held on Monday 18 May 2026. 6pm at Pegswood Community Hub.

Local Issues

Cresswell Dunes

Planning application 25/03122/FUL

Following a site meeting with David Green and Nigel Thompson it was confirmed that the slope management scheme works would commence on 1 June, with an expected timescale of 8 weeks.

Druridge Bay PSPO

Over 200 responses were received from a mixture of local residents, visitors, parish councils, community groups etc. These views were polarised and fell into three main categories:

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Support – people who were fully supportive and echoed concerns over anti-social behaviours such as fires, camping, littering and raves etc

Qualified support – people in this category were generally supportive but asked for additional clarity over terms and improvement/provision of other facilities e.g. local campsites

Objection – those that objected did so on the basis of privacy concerns and the feeling that the response was an over reaction.

Timeline for approval – summary of the feedback must go to the Executive Director for approval. The aim is to get a delegated decision by Monday 11th May, with the PSPO sealed by legal by Wednesday 13th and the earliest it would come into force would be 18 May. If this date slips, PC Joe Rutherford will look for preauthorisation for dispersal orders over the coming weeks covering the Bank Holiday.

Speed Survey

The speed survey outside Orphir Lodge has been completed. Data summarised in the table below.

Job No	Location	Survey Date	Speed Limit	Direction	Average Daily Vehicles	Average Speed	85 th Percentile
TS/25/109 A	C110 Cresswell West (Outside Orphir Lodge)	15/04.202 6 - 27/04/202 6	20mph	Eastbound	843	27.7mp h	33mph
				Westbound	868	27.4mp h	33.1mph

The 85th percentile is that speed at which 85% of vehicles are travelling or less, while the remaining 15% of vehicles will be travelling above that speed.

Within a 20mph speed limit, the 85th percentile is required to be a minimum of 24mph for enforcement to be considered by the police.

Given the results NCC will consider a scheme for traffic calming measures for 2027/28 or 2028/29. Realistically this would probably be chicanes or a raised

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table but once design team have preferred solution they would need to to consult with residents and parish. The results of the survey have been passed to Northumbria Police Road Safety Unit, and I have written to them requesting clarification on:

- Whether this site will be considered for enforcement activity,
- Whether the location will be recorded on the Road Safety Unit database; and
- Whether any interim measures can be considered while longer-term traffic calming options are progressed by the County Council.