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**COMBINED SERVICE AND FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE REPORT**  
**QUARTER 3 2008/09**

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**Responsible Cabinet Member – Councillor John Williams, Leader and all Cabinet**

**Responsible Directors – Ada Burns, Chief Executive and all Directors**

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**SUMMARY REPORT**

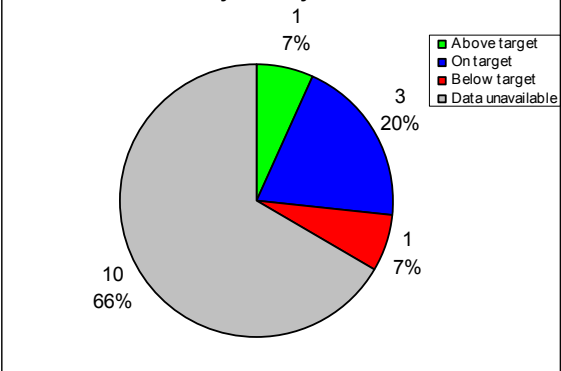
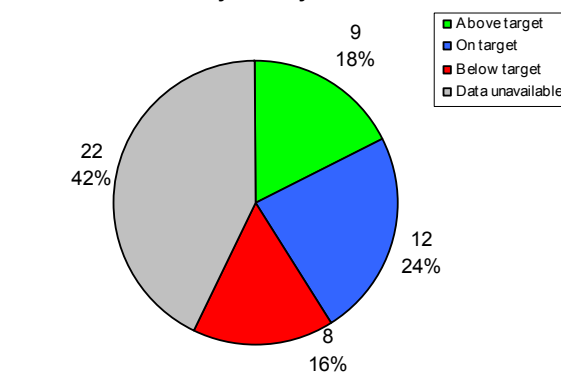
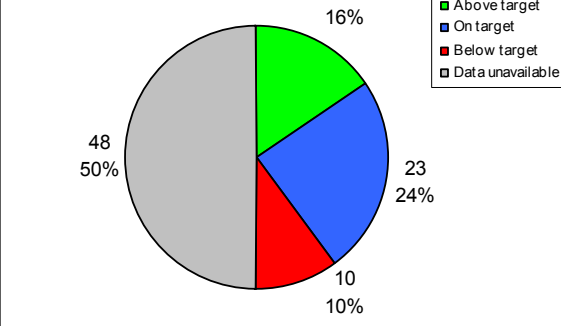
**Purpose of Report**

1. To report the Council's service and financial performance at the end of the third quarter of 2008/09.

**Summary**

2. This report provides a combined quarterly overview of the position on service and financial performance and to show progress against the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) One Darlington : Perfectly Placed, the Local Area Agreement (LAA) and the Council's corporate plan.
3. Performance and delivery achievement headlines since the last report include:
  - (a) The pilot LAA is currently targeted to deliver in excess of £1.5 million in reward grants;
  - (b) The first year review of the 2008-2011 LAA has been completed. Government Office have officially reviewed performance and have no areas for concern;
  - (c) The place survey has been successfully completed, with final weighted data due shortly from the Audit Commission;
  - (d) The Council's CPA scores will be published by the Audit Commission on Thursday 5 March 2009, previously due on 25<sup>th</sup> February. As outlined in the previous combined report, the Audit Commission judged the Council to be performing well and providing excellent value for money in the 2008 corporate assessment and in the Joint Area Review the Council was said to be providing good services to children and young people and a good ability for future improvement. A full breakdown of scores will be presented in the next combined report;
  - (e) Seven of the 16 Local Area Agreement statutory early years and children's services indicators are below target, and full information is provided within the main report. Indicators nationally relating to Key Stage 3 have been deleted;
  - (f) The economic downturn has created additional new pressures which are being addressed by a number of measures, including through the economic downturn working group.

4. Due to the introduction of a new national indicator set (replacing Best Value performance indicators) from 1 April 2008, many indicators are new and collected annually. This means that at this stage of reporting, some gaps in performance reporting are unavoidable and there is a general lack of trend data.
5. The following table provides an overview of service performance progress against target for the SCS, LAA and corporate plan where data is available. The pie charts show the number of indicators and then the percentage of the total, e.g. for the number of NIs by alert symbol for the LAA 51 (this may be reduced to 45 when confirmation is received from Government regarding the Key Stage 3 indicators) there are 9 indicators above target, which is 18% of the total number of PIs :

Plan	Status	Chart															
One Darlington : Perfectly Placed – Sustainable Community Strategy	▲	<p data-bbox="852 678 1415 701"><b>Number of NIs by alert symbol for the SCS</b></p>  <table border="1" data-bbox="852 701 1415 1070"> <thead> <tr> <th>Alert Symbol</th> <th>Count</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Above target</td> <td>1</td> <td>7%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>On target</td> <td>3</td> <td>20%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Below target</td> <td>1</td> <td>7%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Data unavailable</td> <td>10</td> <td>66%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Alert Symbol	Count	Percentage	Above target	1	7%	On target	3	20%	Below target	1	7%	Data unavailable	10	66%
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Above target	1	7%															
On target	3	20%															
Below target	1	7%															
Data unavailable	10	66%															
<p data-bbox="185 1095 608 1128">Local Area Agreement (overall)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="233 1173 608 1240">• Local Area Agreement – Negotiated targets only;</li> <li data-bbox="233 1252 608 1397">• Local Area Agreement – Statutory children’s services and early years targets</li> </ul>	<p data-bbox="695 1106 727 1128">●</p> <p data-bbox="695 1218 727 1240">●</p> <p data-bbox="695 1330 727 1352">▲</p>	<p data-bbox="852 1106 1415 1128"><b>Number of NIs by alert symbol for LAA 51</b></p>  <table border="1" data-bbox="852 1128 1415 1507"> <thead> <tr> <th>Alert Symbol</th> <th>Count</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Above target</td> <td>9</td> <td>18%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>On target</td> <td>12</td> <td>24%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Below target</td> <td>8</td> <td>16%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Data unavailable</td> <td>22</td> <td>42%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Alert Symbol	Count	Percentage	Above target	9	18%	On target	12	24%	Below target	8	16%	Data unavailable	22	42%
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<p data-bbox="185 1529 504 1563">Corporate Plan (overall)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="233 1608 632 1675">• Corporate Plan – Delivery of Community Priorities;</li> <li data-bbox="233 1686 632 1798">• Corporate Plan – Delivery of Organisational Improvements</li> </ul>	<p data-bbox="695 1541 727 1563">●</p> <p data-bbox="695 1653 727 1675">●</p> <p data-bbox="695 1765 727 1787">★</p>	<p data-bbox="852 1541 1415 1597"><b>Number of PIs by alert symbol for the Corporate Plan</b></p>  <table border="1" data-bbox="852 1597 1415 1921"> <thead> <tr> <th>Alert Symbol</th> <th>Count</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Above target</td> <td>15</td> <td>16%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>On target</td> <td>23</td> <td>24%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Below target</td> <td>10</td> <td>10%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Data unavailable</td> <td>48</td> <td>50%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Alert Symbol	Count	Percentage	Above target	15	16%	On target	23	24%	Below target	10	10%	Data unavailable	48	50%
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Data unavailable	48	50%															
Medium Term Financial Plan 2008-2012	●																

High level views of performance as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2008

6. The latest projected financial outturn for the Council's 2008-09 revenue budget is £681,000 reduction in available balances, compared with the budget approved by Council in February 2008.

### **Conclusions**

7. The picture of performance across all areas is on target, although the status of the statutory element of the LAA is currently below target as is the SCS overall. This is due to a single indicator, NI186 per capita CO2 emissions as explained in the main report.

### **Recommendations**

8. It is recommended that Cabinet note: -
  - (a) The areas where targets have not been met including the children's services and early years element of the LAA and ensure action planning is taken to address these key areas of under performance;
  - (b) The overall on target performance against the, Local Area Agreement and Corporate Plan where data is available for reporting and below target performance of one indicator for the Sustainable Community Strategy;
  - (c) The latest projected financial outturn for 2008-09 compared with the budget approved by Council in February 2008.

### **Reason**

9. The recommendations are supported to maintain appropriate management arrangements for the Council's finances to make effective use of the Council's resources and to continue to effectively manage services and improve value for money.

**Paul Wildsmith**  
Director of Corporate Services

**Richard Alty**  
Assistant Chief Executive

### **Background Papers**

Financial reports and *Agresso* computer system

Performance management reports and *PerformancePlus* computer system

David Hall – Financial performance sections, Ext: 2303

David Goodchild – Service performance sections, Ext: 2015

S17 Crime and Disorder	Indicators reported here include those concerned with reducing crime and disorder
Health and Well Being	Indicators reported here include those concerned with improving health and wellbeing
Sustainability	Indicators reported here include those concerned with sustainability
Diversity	There is no specific diversity impact other than that measured by the indicators.
Wards Affected	All wards are affected equally, although specific indicators measure the impact on 'One Darlington'.
Groups Affected	All groups are affected equally, although specific indicators measure the impact on 'One Darlington'.
Budget and Policy Framework	This report does not recommend a change to the Council's budget or policy framework.
Key Decision	This is not classed as a key decision.
Urgent Decision	For the purpose of the 'call-in' procedure this does not represent an urgent matter.
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	Data is reported here to assess progress against meeting the objectives in the SCS.

## MAIN REPORT

### Information and Analysis

10. The content of this report covers the following:
- (a) Background information;
  - (b) Performance information and analysis:
    - (i) One Darlington : Perfectly Placed, the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS);
    - (ii) Local Area Agreement (LAA);
    - (iii) Corporate Plan – both improvement actions and performance information.
  - (c) Proposals for performance monitoring of the One Darlington and Perfectly Placed priorities;
  - (d) Financial information;
  - (e) overview of services' position on budgets and performance indicators;
  - (f) overview of complaints.

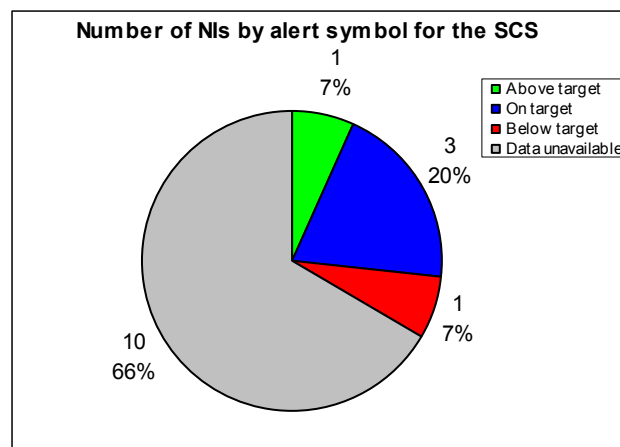
### Background Information

11. This report covers the period April 2008 to December 2008. High-level summary financial information is included in this report and Cabinet is referred to the separate report, which provides detailed financial information. This report provides both a financial and service performance assessment against service plan areas.
12. This report aims to give a high level view of performance, and report by exception any areas of contra performance. All performance information is available for viewing via *PerformancePlus*, with more detailed information available from the Council's Corporate Policy Unit.

### Performance Information and Analysis

<b>(i)</b>	<b>One Darlington : Perfectly Placed – Sustainable Community Strategy</b>	<b>▲</b>
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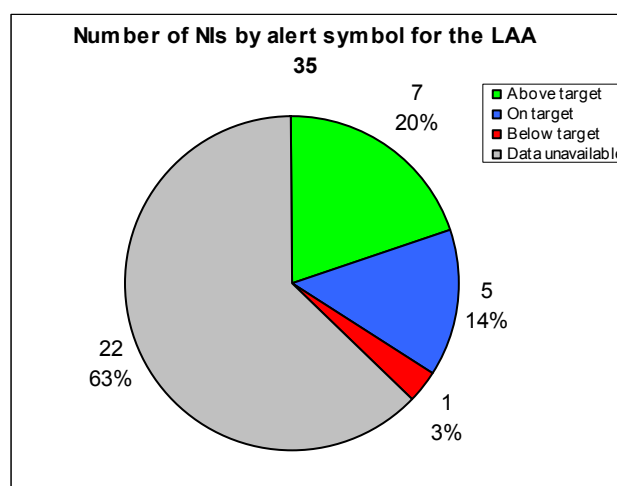
13. The SCS itself incorporates 15 performance indicators (three for each of the five delivery themes) and one of these indicators has two parts. These indicators focus on long-term outcomes that are unlikely to shift significantly within the short-term but over the 13 year lifespan of the SCS they will provide a high level overview of progress in delivering the vision.



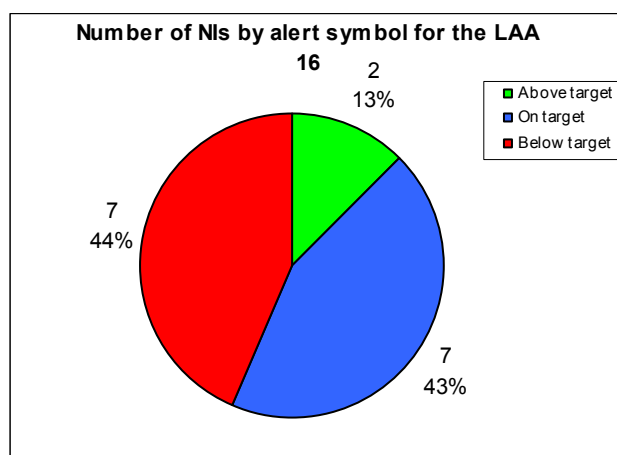
14. The overall status of the SCS is currently ‘below target’, as shown above and this is due to one indicator being below target (NI 186 per capita CO2 emissions). However, data is available for only 5 out of the 15 indicators at the end of quarter 3, and so this is a limited view. As well as NI 186, one of the five indicators is above target, and three are on target.
15. As noted previously, one of the indicators for which data is available is made up of two components. NI 102 measures the gap in achievement between school pupils eligible for free school meals and their peers, achieving the expected level at key stage 2 and at key stage 4. Performance at key stage 2 is 38% better than the agreed target, but at key stage 4 it is 22% worse. Whilst this gives an overall picture of being ‘on target’ for NI 102, steps are being taken to address the key stage 4 position by improving tracking of vulnerable pupils through the introduction of the Assessing Pupil Progress initiative across all Darlington schools.

<b>(ii)</b>	<b>One Darlington : Perfectly Placed – Local Area Agreement</b>	●
	- Local Area Agreement – Negotiated Targets	●
	- Local Area Agreement – Statutory Education Targets	▲

16. The LAA consists of a set of 35 performance indicators (selected from the NI set) and associated targets, negotiated and agreed with government as the delivery plan for in the short term progressing One Darlington : Perfectly Placed over the period 2008-2011. The LAA also includes 16 statutory indicators/targets (although this is likely to reduce to 10 due to the deletion of Key Stage 3 targets) relating to children’s services and early years that must be included in all LAAs.
17. The symbols above show that overall the LAA is ‘on target’ at the end of the third quarter. This overall position is calculated from the available data on both the negotiated and statutory indicators. However, as with the SCS, this overall view is limited, with data available for only 13 of the 35 negotiated indicators at this stage of the year. Data is available for all 16 statutory indicators, which includes the six that may be deleted.
18. Of the 13 negotiated indicators for which data is available, 12 show performance to be on or above target. The indicator showing below target performance is NI 186 as explained in paragraph 14.



19. The 16 statutory education indicators show an amalgamated position of below target by 11.5%. This is effectively the same as reported at quarter 2 as these indicators are collected by academic year, although there have been some very minor changes due to the availability of updated data. This does not affect the overall view.
20. Due to national marking problems with the key stage 3 tests the Audit Commission have said that all of the indicators dependent on Key Stage 3 results to be calculated are now deleted, although confirmation is awaited from Government.
21. Of the 16 indicators:
- (a) 7 indicators are within target tolerance;
  - (b) 2 are above target tolerance:
    - (i) NI 087 – secondary school persistent absence rate is performing 37% above target, and;
    - (ii) NI 099 – children in care reaching level 4 in English at key stage 2 is performing 21% above target, i.e.:



- (c) The seven indicators ‘below target’, as detailed as follows:

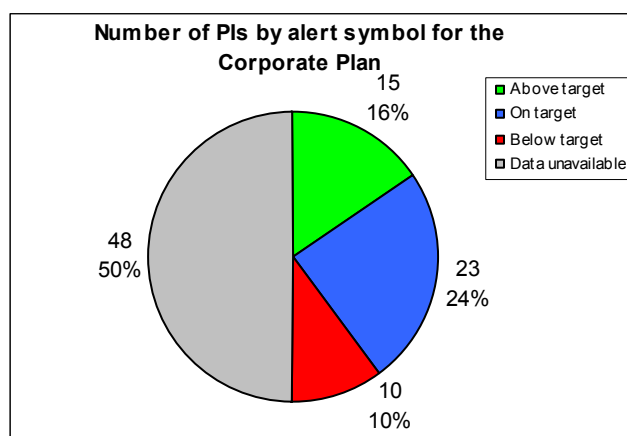
Indicator	Target	Actual
<b>NI 072</b> – (Achievement of 78+ points across Early Years Foundation Stage with 6+ in each scale of personal, social and emotional development and communication, language and literacy)	62.5	48.1
<b>Reasons</b> – The gap between Threshold Target and achievement in 2007 was 22.6%. The gap between Threshold Target and achievement in 2008 is 14.4%, meaning that Darlington is closer to meeting Threshold Target than in 2007. Action is around targeted activity regarding improving in-school/setting moderation, linkages to School Improvement Planning and the use of on-entry data to track progress and to measure improvements in the Early Years Foundation Stage period.		
<b>NI 074</b> - Achievement at level 5 or above in both English and Maths at Key Stage 3 (Threshold)	78	63
<b>Reasons</b> - Assessing pupil progress programme is only just embedding in English and recently introduced in Maths. This is projected to have an impact on standards at KS3 in 2010.		

<b>NI 095</b> - Progression by 2 levels in English between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3	39.0	20.6
<b>Reasons</b> - Assessing pupil progress programme is only just embedding in English and recently introduced in Maths. This is projected to have an impact on standards at KS3 in 2010.		
<b>NI 096</b> - Progression by 2 levels in Maths between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3	70.0	53.9
<b>Reasons</b> - Assessing pupil progress programme is only just embedding in English and recently introduced in Maths. This is projected to have an impact on standards at KS3 in 2010.		
<b>NI 097</b> - Progression by 2 levels in English between Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4	69.0	56.6
<b>Reasons</b> - Despite missing target there has been a 6.4% increase on 2007's figure of 50.2%, demonstrating a significant improvement in this area. Further improvement will follow the roll out of 'assessing pupil progress', which enables teachers to track individual pupil progress through Key Stage 3 and use diagnostic information about pupils' strengths and weaknesses.		
<b>NI 098</b> - Progression by 2 levels in Maths between Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4	34.0	18.8
<b>Reasons</b> - Further improvement will follow the roll out of 'assessing pupil progress' as above.		
<b>NI 100</b> - Looked after children reaching level 4 in maths at KS2	33.0	20.0
<b>Reasons</b> - Large variance are experienced due to low number of looked after children, and movement within this cohort, i.e. target set 18 months prior to exams, and was based on a cohort of 6 children whereas only 5 children in the actual cohort.		

<b>(iii)</b>	<b>Corporate Plan 2008-12</b>	●
	- Corporate Plan - Part A: Delivery of Community Priorities	●
	- Corporate Plan – Part B: Delivery of Organisational Improvements	★

22. The SCS and LAA do not cover everything that is important to the effective running of the council, and so additionally both actions and performance in the Council's Corporate Plan are also presented. The Corporate Plan contains a prioritised basket of indicators and actions which are reported against SCS themes and also corporate objectives.
23. The Corporate Plan is on target overall at the end of the second quarter. A total of 96 performance indicators are attached to the improvement proposals set out in the plan to measure progress against delivery. Of these 96, including both NIs and local indicators, data is currently available for 48, i.e.:






24. Improvement proposals are set out in the plan in two sections or parts – part A contains proposals for delivering outcomes that will contribute to the vision for Darlington; part B sets out proposals for the council’s organisational development. Of the indicators measuring progress against SCS themes, 37 currently have data available and show performance to be on target. Of the indicators measuring progress against the council’s corporate objectives, 11 have data available and show performance above target.
25. The ‘Part A: Delivery of Community Priorities’ basket includes 10 indicators that are currently performing below target. Some of the indicators are repeated in the LAA and are described earlier:

Indicator	Target	Actual
<b>NI 060</b> – percentage of core assessments for children’s social care carried out in less than 35 days <b>Reasons</b> – All cases are allocated and actively worked with. The deficit relates to a problem implementing a new electronic recording system. ACTION: The situation is being kept under review to ensure that data is entered accurately.	86.0	71.8
<b>NI 069</b> – <b>Children who have experienced bullying</b>	32	52.2
<b>Reasons</b> – Baseline to be set from TellUs3 survey (carried out in 2008/09). Targets set using TellUs2 survey, which does not match the analysis carried out for TellUs3 survey.		
<b>NI 072</b> – see section on LAA	62.5	48.1
<b>NI 086</b> – Secondary schools having good or outstanding standards of behaviour <b>Reasons</b> – There are large variances due to small actual numbers. Target missed by one school, with the expectation that the target will be achieved once Longfield school is re-inspected.	83.0	66.7
<b>NI 095</b> – see section on LAA	39.0	20.6
<b>NI 096</b> – see section on LAA	70.0	53.9
<b>NI 097</b> – see section on LAA	69.0	56.6
<b>NI 098</b> – see section on LAA	34.0	18.8

<b>NI 117 – percentage of 16-18 year olds who are not in education, employment or training (NEET)</b>	6.4	8.3
<b>Reasons</b> – Figure reported is November's figure, which is above target because numbers peak between June and September due to the turbulence caused by the final destinations of college leavers being unknown at this time. From October the figure has reduced - currently down 4%. Final actual for this NI is based on the average figure for the three months November 2008 to January 2009 inclusive.		
<b>NI 186 – Per capita reductions in CO2 emissions</b>	-3.4	0.0
2005 (baseline) 7.8 tonnes 2006 7.8 tonnes The actual data reported is percentage variance in 2006 from 2005 (2006 is the latest data available)		

26. The Corporate Plan identifies 166 improvement actions:

Number of corporate plan improvement actions	166
Percentage of corporate plan improvement actions on or above target	91% (151)
Status of corporate plan delivery	

27. A total of 15 corporate plan actions out of 166 (9%) are showing red triangle status, indicating that implementation is currently not achieving approved timescales or targets. In all cases the reasons for actual and planned implementation being out of step relate to changes in circumstances or priorities.
28. Proposals to create a Darlington identity or branding is still being considered by the LSP Prosperous Theme Group as a priority for its action plan. Progress on various components of the Local Development Framework has been delayed by the requirement to carry out further consultation. Work to develop a baseline maturity position for the ODS is expected to be delayed beyond the year end and discussions are underway in light of this. Work on accessibility planning has deteriorated and there is a need for further investigation to establish the reason(s) for this. Work towards achieving the Corporate Equality Standard has been reprioritised due to taking on the delivery of a short term equalities plan which takes into consideration the new Equalities Framework for Local Government. The development of data sharing protocols and agreements with and between partners has been rescheduled due to the necessary requirement to prepare the groundwork. This need was under-estimated when the original timeframe was set. Darlington Partnership Board has agreed the setting up of a multi agency data group which will provide high level leadership to take this work forward.

### **Proposals for performance monitoring of One Darlington and Perfectly Placed Priorities**

29. In order to monitor our contribution to One Darlington, there is a need to focus on narrowing the gap between priority wards and all others, although it is also important that overall 'conditions' improve in all wards. The key challenge for the Council and partners is around tackling deprivation and narrowing the gap in life chances. A basket of indicators

has been selected from the national list, with performance assessed against all wards and priority wards.

30. It is proposed that the first reporting of the One Darlington priority will be for year-end 2008/09. Whilst it can be reported quarterly thereafter, the indicators concerned are long term by their very nature. As such, there may be only gradual movement within quarters, with a paucity of data in the first instance and for this reason it is proposed that an end of year assessment with trend information be implemented, commencing with the quarter 4 report at the end of 2008/09.
31. The Perfectly Placed assessment will take the form of a narrative, highlighting indicative plans on Darlington developments, with key projects and major milestones listed with indicative progress shown.

### **Financial information**

32. The Council's Budget for 2008-09, set by Council in February 2008, was £133.040m, with a planned use of balances of £1.641m. The 2008 to 2012 MTFP included balances at 31 March 2009 of £7.585m. The latest projected balance at 31 March 2009 is £6.904m, which is £681,000 below the 2008-13 MTFP. This reduction in balances includes approvals of additional spending made by Cabinet during the year totalling £335,000. The latest projected outturn is summarised in the tables below.
33. In addition to the service-specific budgets reported in paragraphs 34 to 36, the Council's overall financial position has been adversely affected during 2008-09 by higher costs (particularly energy) and the inability to complete planned land sales in March 2008 as a result of the 'credit crunch'. Reduced investment income resulting from lower interest rates has been more than offset by taking advantage of opportunities to replace a number of loans with lower interest debt. Financial information continues to be reported separately in greater detail. Reports containing detailed 2008-09 outturn projections are elsewhere on this agenda.

<b>Projected Balances 2008/09</b>	<b>£M</b>
2008-12 MTFP Planned Balances at 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2009	7.585
Decrease in opening balance from 2007/08 results	(0.296)
Additional spending approved by Cabinet during 2008/09	(0.335)
Projected reductions/(increases) in net expenditure	
- Departmentally managed resources	0.073
- Corporately managed resources	(0.586)
Additional grant received during 2008/09	0.463
Projected balances at 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2009	<b>6.904</b>

Reduction in projected balances compared with MTFP is £681,000

# GENERAL FUND REVENUE BUDGET MANAGEMENT 2008/09

## JANUARY 2009

	Budget			Expenditure		
	Original 2008/09	Approved Adjustments	Amended Approved Budget	Total Projection	Variance	Variance %
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	
<b>Departmental Balances</b>						
Children's Services	70,220	(458)	69,762	69,798	36	0.05
Community Services	44,604	(468)	44,136	44,711	575	1.29
Chief Executives Office	6,776	73	6,849	6,818	(31)	(0.46)
Corporate Services	9,303	336	9,639	9,645	6	0.06
<b>Total Departmental Resources</b>	130,903	(517)	130,386	130,972	586	0.45
<b>Corporate Resources</b>						
Joint Bodies & Levies	622	0	622	648	26	4.18
Financing Costs	2,354	0	2,354	2,210	(144)	(6.12)
Leading Edge Efficiencies	(1,039)	810	(229)	(107)	122	(11.74)
Support Service Recharges				(156)	(156)	
Pensions Contribution Rate	50	0	50	0	(50)	
Superannuation		158	158	0	(158)	
Change Fund	150	(60)	90	90	0	
Energy Costs		(287)	(287)	0	287	
<b>Total Corporate Resources</b>	2,137	621	2,758	2,685	(73)	
<b>Net Expenditure</b>	<b>133,040</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>133,144</b>	<b>133,657</b>	<b>513</b>	<b>0.39</b>
<b>Contributions to/from Reserves</b>						
Contribution to/(from) revenue balances	(1,641)	0	(1,641)	(1,641)	0	
Additional contribution to/(from) resources		(335)	(335)	(335)	0	
LABGI Grant		463	463	463	0	
Departmental Reserves-Planned Use		14	14	14	0	
	(1,641)	142	(1,499)	(1,499)	0	
<b>General Fund Total</b>	<b>131,399</b>	<b>246</b>	<b>131,645</b>	<b>132,158</b>	<b>513</b>	

## Overview of service position on budgets and performance indicators

34. The table below shows the position regarding delivery of service plans. For financial information the analysis is a projection as to whether the budget is likely to be achieved by the end of the year, within a tolerance dependent on the size of the budget. For services progress is assessed at the nine month stage:

Department/Service Plan (▲ below target , ● on target ★ above target)	Finance	Service
	<b>Chief Executive's</b>	
Communications	●	●
Connecting with Communities	●	●
Health Improvement	●	●
Regeneration	●	▲
Safer Communities	●	●
Strategic Planning and Improvement	●	★
<b>Children's Services</b>		
Children and Families	●	●
Partnerships	★	★
Planning and Resources	●	●
School Improvement & Development	●	●
<b>Community Services</b>		
Adult Social Care	●	★
Building Services	▲	●
Cultural Services	●	●
Environmental Services	●	●
Highways	▲	★
Housing Benefits	●	★
Housing Services	●	★
Supporting People	●	●
<b>Corporate Services</b>		
Customer Services	●	●
Human Resource Management (HRM)	●	●
Information and Communications Technology (ICT)	●	●
Legal and Democratic	●	●
Public Protection	▲	●
Resources	●	●

35. The Regeneration service plans is the only service plan currently below target for service performance. However, this is based on only 9 indicators reporting out of a possible 49, with only two of these indicators showing below target performance with large variances. These are LI 0001 new homes built on previously developed land and NI186 per capita reductions of CO2 emissions, the latter previously noted in this report.

36. Financial service plans compare original MTFP with expenditure. Three service budgets are currently below target. As reported previously for Building Services the budgeted increase

in workload, turnover and profit is not now expected to be achieved in 2008/09. With regard to Highways, global markets have seen a dramatic downturn in both development and housing growth. This is directly felt within the Highways Service. For Public Protection, car parking is projecting a significant reduction in lost income.

### Overview of complaints

37. The following table shows the number of complaints proceeding through the 3 stages of the corporate complaints system broken down by department:

Department	Compliments	Comments	Complaints	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3
Chief Executive's	7	36	275	270	3	4
Children's Services	5	5	48	46	1	1
Community Services	256	185	664	660	6	1
Corporate Services	1	0	16	16	0	0
<b>Darlington BC</b>	<b>269</b>	<b>226</b>	<b>1003</b>	<b>992</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>6</b>

38. The implementation of the new two-stage complaints system is progressing according to timescales, with new procedures and guidelines having gone through widespread consultation, including with the Local Government Ombudsman. The new procedure goes live from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009.

### Consultation

39. Consultation has taken place, as appropriate, with officers and partners regarding the contents of this report.